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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

PORTRAYALS OF OPPRESSION IN CANADIAN LITERATURE

BY

LISE-ANNE LAVIGNE ©

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

EDMONTON, ALBERTA
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Date: April 23 1990

Lazarus was what they called a halfbreed;
Half a man was what the Town would say.
What made him walk so slow, well, they didn't
care to know -
It was easier by far to look away.

'Lazarus'
The Diviners

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PORTRAYALS OF OPPRESSION IN CANADIAN LITERATURE
SUBMITTED BY LISE-ANNE LAVIGNE
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DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

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Date: April 20 1990

ABSTRACT

In Canadian literature, the consequences of oppression are often portrayed in the experiences of characters who belong to marginalized groups. Included in this study are accounts of people from various Native tribes, such as the Beothuk, the Cree, the Ojibway, and the Métis. Their perception of the world they share with whites and the manner in which they survive in their peripheral positions reveals the partial, and oftentimes, total dissolution of the individual's mental and physical well-being.

Peter Such's Riverrun and Rudy Wiebe's The Temptations of Big Bear depict historical events where the Indigenes suffered social injustices. The extermination of the Beothuks, the theft of land and the loss of culture of the Cree are described as experienced by the oppressed. An Antane Kapesh retells the gradual loss of language, culture, spiritual beliefs and land in Qu'as-tu fait de mon pays? And in Tchipayuk ou le chemin du loup and in The Diviners, Ronald Lavallée and Margaret Laurence recount ordeals of Métis life in Canada. The state of oppression is further illustrated in Timothy Findley's novel, Not Wanted on the Voyage, where a hateful patriarch seeks vengeance by destroying the world.

The colonization of Canada is characterised by overt acts of genocide and more covert acts of subjugation and abuse. All of the authors attempt to rewrite history by interpreting the events as seen by the people who were ignored or misrepresented in conventional history. And by giving them voice through literary representation, the authors are de-marginalizing groups who were removed to the periphery of society.

The relationship between man and nature forms the basis of the conflicting ideologies. The Europeans believe that man is a superior being who should subjugate and control his physical environment while the aboriginal people see themselves as belonging to an organic environment which they respect and revere since they depend on the earth for their survival. In these novels, the ethnocentrism of European ideology is imposed on everyone which inevitably leads to loss and destruction.

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INTRODUCTION

Exploitation and oppression are inevitable consequences of colonialism. According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary, colonialism is a "policy of maintaining colonies, (esp., derog.) alleged policy of exploitation of backward or weak people." The verb 'to oppress' is defined as to "lie heavy on, weigh down, (spirits, imagination, etc.); govern tyrannically, keep under by coercion, subject to continual cruelty or injustice;". Since this is a verb of action, and an act has an outcome or incites an event, it follows that oppression can be studied in terms of cause and effect. Subjugation begins at the political level and the ramifications are felt throughout all other aspects of life.

The recurrence of the theme of oppression in Canadian literature, which is especially conspicuous in contemporary works, is often coupled with the theme of history. Many authors are attempting to rewrite history by providing a literary representation of groups who have been marginalized by European colonizers. Within this context, the once silenced voices express the pain of existing in such an environment. The cultural settings differ but the effects felt by members of the various groups are similar; their world characterized by racism, intolerance and violence originating from the ideals of white male supremacy. The final outcome of this attitude is the extinction of races and species, mental and physical torment, linguistic violation and the eradication of cultural practices such as communal living, shared knowledge, and extended families.

In many novels, oppression is depicted by describing two conflicting ideologies placed in the same physical environment where neither side can understand the other. The European ethnocentric view stresses the importance of subjugating nature while the Natives believe that they belong to the natural world. This distinct contrast will form the basis of the analysis of the novels.

In Peter Such's Riverrun, the last of the Beothuks are described as they struggle to retain their lifeblood in a land invaded by Europeans. The Temptations of Big Bear by Rudy Wiebe tells of this disappearance as well as the struggle to preserve the past against this political and social force. An Antane Kapesh's tale Qu'as-tu fait de mon pays? recounts the life of a child after his way of life has been irreversibly altered. These historical fictions examine the plight of the Natives in Canada by showing the way they react to their captors who attempt to stifle a way of life they do not understand. The unique relationship which exists between the Indigenes and their organic environment is uncivilized according to the conquerors. Kapesh is Montagnaise and she offers a Native voice which clearly articulates a felt experience from within, and her protagonist endures many of the same indignities as the characters in the novels written by the white authors.

The oppression suffered by the Métis is depicted in Ronald Lavallée's Tchipayuk ou le chemin du loup and in Margaret Laurence's The Diviners. The protagonists in both works are unable to live in a world dominated by white Eurocentric values nor can they live among other Native tribes. Being a distinct and separate group, they can only live among other Métis groups and their journeys sketch a stark portrait of the Canadian outsider.

Timothy Findley's Not wanted on the Voyage presents the theme of oppression within the Judeo-Christian world in its genesis. The rewriting of the parable of Noah's ark examines the destructive consequences of a highly defined hierarchic patrimony. All are oppressed, even the oppressor. And the novel offers a plausible explanation of tyrannical behaviour, intolerance and prejudice, which all seem to be motivated by fear.

This study does not include a discussion of the anthropological accuracy of these works nor does it include the application of a theoretical model. The available theories and methodologies do not take into account the Canadian Native experience and beliefs. Therefore, emphasis will be placed on the felt experience of the oppressed characters and the manner in which it is presented, either by contrasting reductionist and holistic ideologies or by exposing their wretched and fragmented lives. Moving from covert to overt acts of racism and subjugation, the dramatisation of social injustice in the novels will be analyzed and the various resolutions put forth by the authors will be discussed.

CHAPTER ONE

THE NATIVE EXPERIENCE: EXTINCTION OR SUBJUGATION

Peter Such wrote Riverrun in memory of the Beothuk People who once inhabited the island of Newfoundland. In this elegy for a lost culture, Shawnadithit, the last living person of this tribe, is portrayed both as a free individual and as a captive of the Europeans. The author succeeds in creating empathy for the Native characters by focalizing much of the narrative through them. Even though the story is narrated by a third-person omniscient narrator, the reader is invited to see the world through the eyes of Nonosabasut, Demasduit and Shawnadithit. By presenting a possible version of how the Natives saw and experienced their world, an understanding of the Native predicament is created. Gordon Johnston states that Such attempts

> to bring the Beothuk people to life by conjuring poetically with anthropological facts about them; he succeeds in large part because the artifacts he uses are integrated into a credible "Beothuk" vision of reality which attracts attention to itself for its own sake, not merely as a comment on white values. Such often constructs two versions of a single event from Native and white points of view, but usually centred in or starting with a Beothuk frame of mind. As a result, there are a number of moving scenes in which white readers can understand the actions of the Beothuk characters, but the whites in the story do not and cannot.[1]

A white reader is capable of comprehending the events from the Beothuk perspective. But what is implied in this comment is that Such presents the other side of the story which, like the historically significant massacre at Bloody Point, is usually ignored in Canadian history books. And it is this type of ignorance and silence which is used to justify racial prejudice.

It is inevitable that the theme of oppression be prevalent in Riverrun. In the preface, the author describes how that the Beothuks were slaughtered to extinction in the early part of the nineteenth century. As motivation for the writing of the novel, Such claims that history has not been truthful to the event and he further states that

> By 1800 the Beothuk population of Newfoundland had reached a critical point. ... Evidence suggests that about this time three or four hundred Beothuks were herded onto a point of land near their favourite sealing-site and shot down like deer. The memory of this slaughter persists among the present white population who call this place "Bloody Point" and the nearby stretch of water "Bloody Reach", names never found on any map. History books ignore the event but local traditions have been borne out by recent archaeological investigation ... The remaining Beothuk were reduced to hectic scavenging.
>
> This novel has as its background the events of the next twenty-five years.[2]

This statement is a clear indication of the injustice effected by Canadian scholars on the Beothuks and Peter Such's novel shatters the silence by creating a probable and possible swan song for them. And this desire to remedy the omission from Canadian consciousness of an act of brutality which had irreparable effects on an entire race implies a moral obligation toward the individuals who were so cheated and betrayed.

Empathy is created when Demasduit is captured by the white settlers and her experience in the new world is recounted through her eyes. She cannot understand their way of life where inequality, segregation and isolation qualify daily existence. There is no sense of community, and the companionship and cooperation which are part of everyday Native life are absent, and this puzzles the young woman. She wonders at the strangeness of the fireplace, noting that

> The fire is kept somehow in its own stone house made of cobbles from the shore. There's no smoke from this fire in the whiteman's mamateek. The fire is at one wall, not in the middle where people can sit around it equally. From cruel black hooks large pots dangle. Small pots sit on a flat place by the flames. (p. 92)

While living in this house, the young woman sleeps alone for the first time. She sees the various rooms as realms which separate people and she does not understand why anyone would want to be segregated from one another. Even the crying child is kept alone and his unanswered plea disturbs her. Demasduit wonders if

> It too in its separate room? She doesn't hear a mother come to comfort it. She listens till it stops. Night and the cry together make whole the divided house as she lies there.
>
> Then she, Demasduit, wife of Nonosabasut, mother of Waunathoake, in her belly her own sadness heavy and unuttered, sleeps, for the first time, alone. (p. 95)

The darkness, the isolation and the lack of comfort seem to predominate in this strange place. The Beothuk way of life emphasize the collectivity of the family; they live in a circular space with the fire in its centre where all members share equally in its warmth. The square structure, with the divided rooms and the fire against a wall, negates equality and communal living. And by describing Demasduit's experience in impressionistic terms, Such delineates the contrast between the two ways of life, the communal and the segregated.

Another aspect of the Native world which cannot be replicated in captivity is the natural acceptance and expression of sexuality. Demasduit no longer recognizes her own body as it becomes fat and tense; she is painfully aware of her wasted physical being as, "[s]he rocked remembering the forgotten uses of her body" (p. 108). Her body becomes a foreign object like everything else in her environment. She yearns for simple things: someone saying her name which has been taken from her and changed to Mary March and returning to her People who can no longer be found. In sickness she has become thin and wonders if she has not been tainted by her exposure to the White men. Demasduit dies in captivity, alone like a white person, dissipated, another step toward the decimation of her race.

There are numerous incidents in the novel which portray the Beothuk way of life. Their convictions originate from their spiritual beliefs which establish order and balance in their lives. During a hunting expedition, Nonosabasut stops the kill after catching the twelfth partridge because he fears retaliation from the bird's spirit. The narrator states that

> it wasn't a good thing to take too many. During the difficult springtime they might not come your way because the spirit who ruled them considered you greedy. (pp. 16-7)

By listening to the spirit of the bird, the Beothuks control their greed and make ecologically sound decisions; it is for their own future well-being that these beliefs are followed. Even though these theories are not scientifically valid, there is another kind of logic at work in the Native laws.

Some concepts are embraced by both the Christians and the Beothuks such as the belief that the soul leaves the body when a person dies. When Nonosabasut is murdered, the narrator describes that there was

> No breath no blood no life. Nonosabasut is dead. He is dead on the People's frozen lake. Under the iron ice his soul is gliding down the river to the islands and to the churning sea where the sun rises. (p. 85)

The difference here lies in the resting place of the soul, as well as the way in which each group worships. When Demasduit is taken into captivity, she realizes that Reverend Leigh is an important personage because he tells stories. Since the Beothuks are an oral people, the propagation of their culture is done verbally and the story teller is an important member of his society. But the styles practised by these individuals differ as Demasduit notices that, "[t]here was no laughing and clapping and dancing as there was when old Wothamisit used to tell his stories" (p. 99). The quiet and repressive atmosphere in the Church is foreign to the woman who does not understand this deadened celebration of life.

Such is careful to detail the manner in which this culture slowly perishes. In one episode, he presents the loss of oral knowledge with the death of the elderly tribal leaders. After the massacre at Bloody Point the Beothuks changed their lives to accommodate the new boundaries imposed by the Europeans. Moreover, new limitations occurred from within the tribe itself and Nonosabasut is a victim of these restrictions. He is described as

> a good hunter. Even in those hunts like this one that took no courage. The forest respects Nonosabasut, Wothamisit tells everyone. But sometimes, returning with his dead prizes, he has the bad feeling of brutal moments, a haunting of fierce free eyes clouding with death, a wish within him to make some ceremony, some amends. Wothamisit told him there used to be a chant he learned as a boy that hunters would sing to the spirits of the hunted before setting out and again when they returned. But he had forgotten most of the words. There were many other small ceremonies that had been known to the shamans among the People, his own father as well. But such magic had all been forgotten when his father and the others had all died in the big massacre at the sealing-site. (pp. 20-1)

This magic that has been lost is intuitively known to Nonosabasut who experiences the remorse of killing and of taking from the earth without expressing the felt gratitude. The death of the elders has left a great void in the young man's life; he no longer has any points of reference or sources of spiritual information. In an oral society, once knowledge is lost, it is impossible to retrieve it; it dies with the bearer. And the remainder of the People are left without the wisdom and the guidance of their ancient legends.

The quest motifs are numerous in Riverrun; they appear in the form of physical journeys which take place throughout the entire work beginning in the first paragraph. The narrator describes the past when the People would undertake their yearly journey to the sea and their return inland in order to take advantage of the food resources. But with the arrival of the Europeans who exploit the land for material gain, the seasonal cycle is broken and this change in life-style expedites the Beothuks' demise. Nonosabasut recalls his first impression at the sealing site by the sea where

> he'd seen a horizon of skinned carcasses, soft boulders from the sea, piled where the white hunters had left them. Towards the season's end, he saw a beach again littered, but this time with the shot-down bodies of the People, his father's lost somewhere among them. It was only after his escape with Wothamisit that the sight had made him vomit and shake. Would the whitemen have skinned those carcasses also? (p. 21)

First of all, the slaughtered bodies of the seals is an unnatural sight in both form and content. The People do not kill such large quantities of animals when they hunt and they do not allow good meat to decay. The brutal killing of wildlife for the monetary value of the skins is foreign to the Beothuks. But with the arrival of the White men, the landscape becomes a dumping ground. The refuse left behind also includes the slaughtered bodies of the Beothuk. Now that the beach has been conquered, the Natives can no longer feed themselves from the sea and their journeys remain inland.

The change in the quest motif is also prompted by the building of a port by the Europeans and Nonosabasut decides that his people will no longer journey to the sea. Once again, the quest or journey is presented in a negative framework. He decides that "[t]his evening the People will rouse themselves and move on. They will never return here again" (p. 3). The Beothuks are a peaceful nation who do not want to fight against the Whitemen; they journey to another part of the island to find sustenance. But the cyclical pattern of their quest is destroyed. The image of the discontinuous cycle links the novel together as Leslie Monkman explains in _A Native Heritage_ where he writes that

> The title of the novel reinforces Such's emphasis on the tragic inevitability of the Beothuk's death. Taken from the initial word of _Finnegan's Wake_, the title reappears in the phrases linking the beginning and ending of that work that are quoted by Such as an epigraph: ... In Joyce's work, the phrases suggest the cyclical flow of continuing existence, but Such's novel presents not continuation but extinction. The last Beothuks, whose life has cyclically run along the river linking their inland lake to the sea, confront the catastrophic breaking of the cycle, and the novel concludes: ...[3]

The cycle or circular movement cannot be changed because it is based on the logic of the land. Once the circle is broken, the rules vanish, and chaos returns as the Beothuks lose power and all sense of themselves as a community.

The last Beothuk to survive is Shawnadithit and her story is narrated in the third person, but the woman's voice is heard as she speaks to her mother, Doodebewshet, recounting the horror of a lost people. Then the author places a diary entry by the Reverend Wilson and a letter by Peyton on succeeding pages. This technique is employed at various locations throughout the narrative; the novel begins with a proclamation, a formal document written by the English Governor. There are two types of discourse present throughout and they are placed parallel to one another, contrasting the two different points of view embodying dissimilar ways of life. The white discourse is the formal linear written communication while the Beothuks speak in a more personal, perhaps holistic manner of an oral culture.

By contrasting the European and Beothuk ideologies, Such exposes the dichotomy which demonstrates the hypocrisy of the men who intended to civilize the savages. In "Crosscurrents in Peter Such's Riverrun," Arnold E. Davidson describes the novel as a combination of flow and eddies, countercurrents and undercurrents which provide a complete portrait of life. One of these countercurrents is made up of members of the white community who attempt to convert the indigenous people to their religious doctrine. They believe that they can help them but their efforts are based on ignorance. Davidson writes that these people

> are found wanting. But they are also all shown to be so blinded by their own limited and limiting

> belief that they are civilized Christians and that there are no other values besides their own that they must be partly excused for the barbarities they perpetrated. In a real sense, they knew not what they did, whether it was killing thieving Indians to teach them a lesson in Christian morality (such actions are portrayed in the novel) or trying to bring civilization to the savages without ever noticing what civilization actually brought.[4]

One could add that the European definition of civilization is one of negation. It implies controlling and subjugating the environment and eliminating anything that is natural. The responsibility for the death of the Beothuk nation is placed on a deficiency in the conquerors, their intellectual and spiritual rigidity and atrophy which led them to reject all other points of view. Such exposes the thoughtless cruelty of these colonizers in relation to the indigenous population. Their self-righteousness blinds them to the humanity of others and this trait succeeds in making them as insensitive as the other Europeans who claim the land for material gain. The man who killed Nososabasut justifies his action by stating that "'[i]t was only an Indian,' and he wished he had shot a hundred instead of one" (p. 87). There are two European ideologies at work in the text, the materialistic and the virtuous and both are unjust. The alleged saviours want to alter the Native way of life; this means that beliefs, values and religious institutions which are not found within their culture are dismissed as erroneous and their rules are imposed on everyone. But this is justified because their purpose is to improve the lives of the weak and primitive heathens. This behaviour is an arrogant, self-righteous, intolerant, and brutal way of dealing with human beings.

This interpretation of Riverrun is not shared by all scholars. Carole Henderson Carpenter accuses Such of exploiting the Natives. In her work entitled, Many Voices: A Study of Folklore Activities in Canada and Their Role in Canadian Culture, she describes some works by non-Natives about Natives as being

> exploitative in that the native is used as an image. In the space of a year, for example, five novels by Canadian authors used Indians as their primary image or figure but were not intended to portray Indian life.[5]

These works include Wayland Drew's The Wabeno Feast, Robert Kroetsch's Gone Indian, W.O. Mitchell's The Vanishing Point, Peter Such's Riverrun, and Rudy Wiebe's The Temptations of Big Bear, all of which were published in 1973. This opinion is also held by T.D. MacLulich who cynically describes all of these works, except for The Wabeno Feast, as trendy because they contain Natives as symbols. The critic claims that

> If it isn't snow, then it's Indians! might well be the complaint of some new Voltaire, viewing recent Canadian literature. The Indian as (in Atwood's phrase) ancestral totem has become a fixture in Canadian writing. Yet, despite his popularity, the meaning of the fictional Indian has not been firmly established. Writers feel free to use him as a symbol of their own special concerns, although of course there are some well-established conventions: the Indian as exotic; the Indian as victim; the Indian as moral reproach to white society; the Indian as a symbol of intuitive wisdom and natural vitality; the Indian as an alternative to white society.[6]

Scepticism can lead to an inquiry and the uncovering of new information, but the cynicism inherent in this quotation is self-indulgent and counter-productive. MacLulich's arrogant comments express a passive form of racism which encompasses verbal and written racial slurs. Why should the 'fictional Indian' have a 'firmly established' meaning? Do 'fictional Whites' have a 'firmly established' meaning in literature? Moreover, the assumptions made concerning the purpose of the authors in employing Natives in their works are unsubstantiated. Further in the same article, MacLulich describes Riverrun as

> a prose elegy for the exterminated Beothuks of Newfoundland. It presents one theme: the Beothuks as victims of white society. The Indians do not quite emerge as fully-realized characters within their fictional world. (p. 49)

The Beothuks are presented as flat characters in this short novel but this does not mean that they are symbols and that only one theme is present in the work. Other themes include the Native way of life which is not an alternative way of life as MacLulich calls it. Such does not present the two ways of life as being mutually exclusive nor do the Beothuks have a choice in the matter. They do not choose between the white or red way of life because this type of reductionist approach is not a part of the Native character's thought processes. As well, other themes include dispossession, the life cycle, journeys, death, the effects of colonization, conflicting ideologies, and numerous others. The arrogance and self-righteousness which led to the destruction of an entire culture is demonstrated in the present-day literary criticism of academics.

In Sex and Violence and the Canadian Novel, John Moss isolates another concept in Riverrun. The theme of universality is present in the lack of understanding and tolerance which can exist between groups of people. He writes that, in this novel,

> ... individuals are poetic emblems of their tribe and race and species, and collective identity and moral consciousness are one. The special vision ... makes it difficult to dissociate them from those communities, yet this does not mean they have less of the universal. ... Riverrun can be universally appreciated, for while it is thoroughly located within a particular community it speaks to the human heart and soul.[7]

The sense of community is once again emphasized and the description of the collective experience of a group of people cannot be labelled an act of exploitation as Carpenter argues. Peter Such manifests an ideology by employing fictional constructs and, even though his characters are flat, they are not stereotypes. It appears that his novel has annoyed or troubled critics in various ways. This disagreement, as seen in the contradictory opinions, might indicate one possible reason why this work has been neglected in literary scholarship.

J.J. Healy comments that the subject matter of the novel is ignored by the Canadian establishment as a whole when he writes that

> Peter Such's Riverrun (1973) is a minor masterpiece of modern Canadian literature which has, to a certain extent, been undervalued simply because the phenomenal frontier on which he found his subject and inside which he sought to engage in has not itself been properly marked in Canadian culture.[8]

The thought that a massacre of such magnitude occurred on Canadian soil is disturbing but suppressing and ignoring the event is in itself an act of resignation. It will only lead to the perpetuation of the myth that colonization is beneficial for the colonized. And it is within this silence that Such "works with moral bitterness around an absence and searches for a language to reestablish presence" (Healy, p. 86). The voice of the Beothuks is revived, albeit in a fictional mode since the knowledge and the truths of this oral culture died with Shawnadithit in 1829.

As a final comment on the overall impact of Riverrun, the moral implications of this work are difficult to overlook. In his article, "An Intolerable Burden of Meaning: Native Peoples in White Fiction," Gordon Johnston states that the characters are not used as symbols because they are depicted within specific cultural contexts. The characters

> ... become isolated from each other but ... derive meaning only from their relation to each other and their people. So, another method of subverting the symbolic role is to imagine the Indian characters in their social and cultural context, to expand the frame of the mirror to include more of their own setting, not to move them into a white world. Meaning is then being provided, not out of an external ideology, but in relation to their own values, by means of the internal relations, as in realist fiction. The presentation of a community also allows for the inclusion of a range of characters between the familiar symbolic poles. ...

> The novels are full of the possessions, the kinship, the shared values of the characters themselves (as with the white character of "realist" fiction). Novels like riverrun, The Vanishing Point, and The Temptations of Big Bear elaborate extensively on communal realities and the communal nature of reality. (Johnston, pp. 61-62)

An attempt is made to dispel the standard use of Natives in literature as symbols and to describe them and their way of life deliberately excluding stereotypes such as the noble savage, commonly found in European literature. The characters in Riverrun define themselves according to their relationships with others; Demasduit thinks of herself as "Demasduit, wife of Nonosabasut, mother of Waunathoake" (p. 95). Meaning is derived from her relationships with her family, and her forced separation from them illustrates the Europeans' total lack of understanding and humanity toward the Beothuk whom they treat as exotic and curious objects. Moreover, the representation of the Native as a victim is unavoidably present in Canadian literature since this is the reality of the external world created by British imperialism and colonization. The difference which exists in this work is that the cause of victimization is not placed on the alleged inadequacies of the Native. He is not responsible for the malicious and inhuman behaviour forced upon him and his life style is not primitive according to Such. Rather, it is a communal life style where the interrelationship of individuals creates a complex and unified environment.

A similar complexity is found in Rudy Wiebe's novel, The Temptations of Big Bear. By placing the characters in their natural environment and through the manipulation of multiple viewpoints, the author succeeds in creating understanding and empathy for a lost society and for a man who tried to keep his people together. Big Bear is the Cree leader whose experience on the prairies in the latter part of the nineteenth century is used as a pivotal centre to demonstrate the conflicts inherent in the process of colonization. He tries to maintain peace during the war between the provisional government of Louis Riel and the Canadian government. The English perspective is provided by numerous representatives of the Canadian government and Her Majesty Queen Victoria, while Big Bear, his family and the members of the tribe present the other side of the dilemma. In terms of geometrics, the Cree world is made of circles and curves, revolutions and movement, while the English embrace squares and straight lines, and stasis and fixity.

The references to the circle are abundant because it represents the holistic quality of Native life where everything is unified. It describes the relation between human beings and the land on which they live; when Big Bear kills a buffalo, the narrator states that, "[i]n the circle of the sun and sky and earth and death he stood complete."[9] Big Bear's spiritual beliefs are founded on the principles of ~~the~~ circle of the earth and of all the realms associated with, and connected to, the central sphere. The confusion and disorder of the white world are eliminated when the chief tells himself to "[c]ome back to the circle of the Earth" (p. 62). He remembers his father's voice telling him that "[a]ll living has soul and the greatest of all living is Sun. It is good to pay respect when he comes back to the circle of Earth to rest" (p. 49). The words of his father are now the air and the ground he stands on; Big Bear has internalized his ancestors' beliefs. Wholeness is attained when the circle completes itself as in the revolutions of the sun in the continuous cycle of the four seasons.

The circle also represents unity within the community which is the source of strength for the River People. Big Bear tells the tribal chiefs that their only hope for survival with the white men is to rally together in order to confront them as a group. He explains that

> That is the way life is, and it is our good life, and I have prayed day and night this past winter when I heard children crying from a pain we have all known, often, but now with the end of everything we have ever lived standing at the end of it, prayed out Only One give me back those days. But I see now they will not come. Never. I see that. Unless we all together make a life circle with our hands and face the Whiteskins as one. (p. 99)

Big Bear thinks that unity created by the life circle will allow the Natives the opportunity to preserve their way of life. He wants to defy the ideology of imperialism which aspires to create empires by dividing the indigenous people, turning them against one another and then conquering the land.

The tactic is commonly known as "divide and conquer," which accurately describes the British stratagem. A conflict might be avoided if the Natives deter any inner division by keeping the circle intact when speaking with one voice. Mutual agreement and cooperation are the means by which Big Bear hopes to sustain his ancient way of life.

The circle becomes destructive in the hands of the British. It is depicted as the noose of the hangman's rope which is the new method of imposing death on the Natives under White law. Big Bear tells the Queen's representatives:

> "I heard the Governor was to come, and I said that I shall see him. When I see him I will make one request. There is something that I dread. To feel the rope around my neck. It is not given to us by The Great Spirit that Redmen or Whitemen should spill each other's blood." (p. 25)

The Governor does not understand why the leader should fear hanging and he labels him a coward. The circle of the noose, as it becomes smaller, obstructs the air passages and it suffocates the individual. In the novel, the Natives die because they no longer have any breath. But it is also a symbol of oppression as Deborah Bowen deciphers that

> When the white men do not understand the significance of Big Bear's image of the rope, it is because they are thinking metonymically - that is, they associate "rope" only with the larger concept linked to it in kind. Big Bear is using "rope" metaphorically, to refer to the larger concept of suppression and subordination which is linked to "rope" imagistically.[10]

What is also present in this image is the loss of breath and the loss of the voice and sound. When Big Bear hears of his son's death, he says that "he has choked out his breath; my son has ridden to the sand Hills without breath. Without breath, without breath" (p. 349). Speaking of Poundmaker who was strangled, the narrator writes that "[h]e died too because he had no breath" (p. 408). A woman named The One Who Fills Her Seat committed suicide by hanging because she feared the white soldiers; death is preferable over their brand of justice. The circle is transformed into a symbol of oppression and death for the River People.

Big Bear has a prophetic vision of his people hanging from broken necks, the first of four visions found in the novel. During a council with other tribal leaders, the Cree chief narrates:

> They were stiff up and down and they wore black clothes like Whiteskins but I could see they were River People. Those were River People, their hands behind their backs and their heads twisted to the side as if their spirits had been jerked out at their necks and their necks frozen. They did not seem to be standing, they just were there in a row coming closer and turning a little as if air turned them. I could see the circle like a burn around each crooked neck and their faces were swollen thick full of blood and I could not recognize anyone. But it seemed to me I knew each one of them. (p. 65)

Big Bear notices that there is something unnatural and inexplicable in the deaths of his People. The circle burned the neck, the spirit had been taken, stolen out of the body and what remains is as light as air. The manner in which these people died is foreign to the chief and he cannot comprehend the procedure of hanging as well as the theft of a person's spirit and will. This vision prophesies the psychological abuse imposed on the Natives by the Whites before their actual physical death. Therefore, the circle is also the symbol of the destruction of the soul. White men have established a new form of retribution and death in the prairies; the person's spirit is separated from his body which is then left hollow, without substance or value.

In a letter to Sir John A. MacDonald, Edgar Dewdney explains the English perspective when he writes that

> It is all so vast, so laid out in unending curving lines that you can begin to lose the sense of yourself in relation to it. Believe me, Sir John, it can drive a small man to madness, this incomprehensible unending at any point seemly unresisting and unchecked space. To control, to humanize, to structure and package such a continent under two steel lines would bring any engineer headier joy than the lyric prospects of heaven. (p. 114)

The British way is to take nature and separate it into manageable parts in order to control it. The majestic space makes Dewdney feel small and invisible. He cannot accept his minor role in the larger order of things. And this need to control the environment is an attempt at masking feelings of insignificance when the importance of the individual is seen as trivial within the vastness of the prairie. The rejection of the landscape and the analogy made with madness all point to the character's lack of emotional relation to and identification with his environment.

For the indigenous people, the land fills a void as opposed to creating one. The world, or Mother Earth, is the provider and she allows the People to live on her and off her bounty. This totally different approach is expressed by Big Bear when he states that no one can own land. He tells the government officials that

> "No one can choose for only himself a piece of the Mother Earth. She is. And she is for all that live, alike. ... Who can receive land? From whom would he receive it?" (pp. 28-9)

Like the Beothuks, there is a communal sense in this ideology and what they are sharing is land. It cannot be owned and this is not understood by the British who want to appropriate the land to build a railroad. And this nomadic tribe does not understand the concept of living on a reservation of one square mile of land. Big Bear tells James McKay that

> "The Governor says we will live as we have always lived. I have always lived on the Earth with my people, I have always moved as far as I wished to see. We take what the Earth gives us when we need anything, and we leave the rest for those who follow us. What can it mean, that I and my family will have a 'reserve of one square mile'? what is that?" (p. 29)

For a nomadic people, the concept of changing into a fixed, agricultural community is absurd. The phrase, 'she is' more aptly describes the position of the earth in relation to humanity. She is worshipped in her natural state as a powerful force and the purpose of man is not to change her to accommodate his will, but to accept her totally as she exists. In this respect and acceptance of the land, the Natives are neither generous nor greedy. They live in a healthy median between these two extremes and it is this position which is unfathomable to the Whites.

Therefore, when the Europeans divide the land with two straight lines of metal for the railway, the Crees do not comprehend this arbitrary division. The confusion created by this formation alters Big Bear's perception of the land. He observes that

> though the land appeared the same, something was wrong with it. As if just under the edge of his vision a giant blade was slicing through the earth, cutting off everything with roots, warping everything into something Whiteskin clean and straight though when he tried to stare down, get under it to see, it looked as it always had, seemingly. (p. 91)

It is as though the land has been raped by the steel and Big Bear does not notice any visible harm. But underneath he senses that something has been seriously altered. As the curved lines are being replaced by straight ones, all living things are separated from their ancestry and origins. The square, immovable buildings of Fort Pitt violate the natural order and are a constant reminder of the destructive changes occurring.

Moreover, this leads Big Bear to fear that the sun will become square. He tells the chiefs that

> "Sometimes when I meditate and look, ... the sun no longer looks round. It's starting to look as if it had four corners. ... I want my children who aren't born yet to see our round sun." (p. 93)

since the sun is the greatest of all living things, then a square sun represents the death of everything Native. One of the several traditions which are disappearing is the rite of passage into manhood. Kenneth M. Roemer has discussed the irony in the novel. He writes that one of these episodes

> involves one of Big Bear's sons, Kingsbird. After years of waiting, Kingsbird finally proves himself by stealing two good horses from a Blackfoot camp. He returns triumphantly only to find his band arguing with government surveyors who are already marking out the land for railroads and farms even though Big Bear has not yet consented to give up his land. Thus at the instant Kingsbird proves himself in a world of horses and encampments, that world is crumbling before a world of iron horses and settlements.[11]

The abrupt change leads to a total disruption of everyday life as well as traditional ceremonies. But this event might be more appropriately called tragic; the loss of these customs eventually leads to the gradual disappearance of the culture. Roemer concludes his review by stating that The Temptations of Big Bear portrays the white man as possessing "the unwillingness to honour Indian viewpoints and an arrogant self-righteousness coupled with an unrighteous greed" (p. 265). This same attitude prevailed when the Europeans annihilated the Beothuks. In both Native cultures, greed is tempered by natural laws but the Whites accept greed as a distinguishing feature in a man. It embodies many of the qualities of a successful person: initiative, industry, responsibility, strength and resilience. That it leads to cruel and condescending behaviour is acceptable.

More subtle indications of this posturing occurs with the Whites' practice of changing or altering the names of the Natives. The correct term for the Crees is Nehiyawok. In My Tribe, The Crees, Joseph F. Dion writes that

> The term Cree was probably given us by the French and I am unaware of its meaning. We call ourselves Nehiyawok and this too is of unknown origin. However, it has been customary to refer to any people resembling us as Nehiyaw people, or Cree people, in the same manner as "Indian" is used by English speakers to designate the natives of Canada.[12]

This complete lack of respect has resulted in the transformation of many important terms by the Whites. The worship of the primary god is called the Sun Dance for many tribes in Western Canada. Yet for the Cree, this is called the Thirst Dance. Big Bear is surprised when he hears Quinn call the ceremony the Sun Dance and he tells him that the River People "called their main worship of The Only One, Thirst Dance" (p. 155). This might appear to be trivial but when placed in its proper context, the issue of names is vital to the spiritual understanding of these people. And the misnaming or renaming in both novels is another indication of the white contempt for the Natives.

In the Cree world, words have power, and, moreover, the names of individuals and things have a different meaning in an oral culture. Big Bear states that "[a] word is power, it comes from nothing into meaning and a Person takes his name with him when he dies" (p. 398). Being a shaman, he was named when he had his first vision during his adolescence. He tells the council members that "[e]veryone knows how the Great Parent of Bear gave me my name and a song when I was young, ..." (p. 206). When his son kills a small mangy bear during a hunt, the chief tells him that Little Bear would be a good name for him. Little Bad Man thinks his father is joking but the narrator writes that Big Bear "had not intended that it sound that way, the name had simply come and a name that came like that was good but it could gather no meaning if Little Bad Man refused to feel for it" (p. 131). The importance of names in an oral culture is described by Walter J. Ong in his work, Orality and Literacy. The author states that words are thought of as "conveying power over things."[13] A person has power over a thing when he names it. Yet a name is not something that can be seen; it describes the basic essence of the thing named. Big Bear tells Kitty that "[w]ords are not just sound" (p. 314). There is a deeper meaning to utterances and this also is not understood by the whites.

In the multiplicity of points of view which Wiebe offers, the section written by a Canadian volunteer expresses the most violent prejudice against the Natives as a race. This military perspective of the event comprises fourteen pages all of which are suffused with sarcasm and cynicism. This section could be described as an attempt at irony but too many important issues surface in this section for it to be so easily dismissed. Through this character, Wiebe disputes the stereotype of the

Noble Savage. The volunteer states that "[t]he noble red man, you must be aware, seems to have sadly degenerated since the days of Fenimore Cooper" (p. 317). The malicious bantering of this character acquires a savage force at the end of the section when he states that he has caught and sexually assaulted the Métis, Pierre Blondin. The volunteer recalls that

> His clothes are flying in shreds and when he breaks out, screaming, he's mother naked. He's fast but he hasn't a chance, we've got him headed for the river, ... and my riding quirt takes some solid bits out of his tan ass as he runs and some on the other side and behind with willow switches that work him damn near as good. Towards the river he stops sounding off, suddenly, just runs bloody and his moccasins are too much for my boots so I dive at him, feet legs belly I've got him and the boys working his head and some his legs while I'm peeling him apart in the middle wherever my fingers can get in, then I've really got him where he'll never forget it and a sound comes out of him high this time, and thin like a gopher just before he's hit by a weasel; he's jerking like he's made of cut string, ... (p. 328)

In the first paragraph of the section, this same character complains that "the degraded and undisciplined savage, you know, has disregarded the most common courtesies of war, ..." (p. 315), because they have decamped. However, it appears that this type of sadistic behaviour toward the enemy, that is, the coupling of violence and sex in a group homosexual attack, is part of 'the most common courtesies of war', a rather unusual expression of courtesy. This incident is a microcosm for an attitude which is prevalent throughout the novel. A double standard is applied, that is, the Natives are supposed to act according to White law but the Whites need not return the civility. Also, this man thinks of himself as a preferred being because he has been formally educated, and this becomes another venue for his violence. This blatant elitism is self-evident in statements such as:

> We glance at our commander, of the build of Falstaff albeit somewhat brighter in complexion, and are again impressed by the vast advantage education confers on one. ... With us everything is done with dignity, a sense of the eternal fitness of things. (pp. 318-9)

The tone in this section is antagonistic, pompous and cynical; the hatred is directed against everyone but the privileged few who are educated and of full European ancestry. And the brutal attack on the Métis is justified because he is of another kind, part native, uneducated even though intelligent, and accused of having desired a white woman.

Moreover, the depiction of violence also occurs in the discourse itself. Sherrill E. Grace distinguishes two types of discourse in the article, "Structuring Violence: 'The Ethics of Linguistics' in The Temptations of Big Bear". Violence in this novel is found not only in themes and plot, but also in the use of language which Grace calls linguistic violence. The discourses used are the horizontal narrative of contiguity and the vertical narrative of substitutions. The first is European, the second Native and the distinctive characteristics of the entire text are described as

> A language of "proposition" is a language of nomination and denotation relying heavily upon syntactic order, contiguity, relations of cause and

> effect - in short, on metonymy. A language of "parable," by contrast, implies something very different, something suggestive, allusive, and alogical, something paradigmatic, arising from analogy and relations of similarity - in short, from metaphor. As might be expected, in The Temptations of Big Bear the horizontal narrative of contiguity presenting the White story is heavily metonymic whereas the vertical narrative is highly metaphoric.[14]

Both discourses embody distinct ideologies and this bipolarity of narrative discourse creates the violence. And this violence is experienced by the reader who is startled by the distance which exists between the white and the Native mind. These are also the differences which generally exist between a written and an oral culture. Grace writes that

> The point to be made about The Temptations of Big Bear is not how well Wiebe has created an Indian, but how well he has exploded the porcupine of language and form to make us see the violence of 1885 and to understand how language, with the ideology it supports, creates the conditions of that violence. ... ; it is a novel that creates a linguistic space between the opposed peoples, forces the reader to occupy that ground, and then batters him from both sides with words, some rational and familiar (hence doubly dangerous), others rhythmic and strange. (p. 20)

This might sound pessimistic because of the sharp differences existing between the two discourses where the two sides do not understand one another, but Wiebe does not allow the reader to fall into a state of despair. The character of Kitty represents the possibility of a union of the two sides and her initiation into the state of Personhood is a spiritual experience indicating that this is a plausible level for the overlap of Native and European ideologies.

One point which Grace overlooks is that the actions of people as well as their language, reflect their ideology. For example, the Europeans' greed and narrow vision result in the near extinction of the buffalo on the plains. Conservation and replenishing is not alogical because it is part of a larger view which is circular. The Natives operate on a system of seasons and life cycles which is incomprehensible to the whites who only think of killing the animal, selling the fur and making money. They seem to think that the resources are unlimited and their scope is not wide enough to permit a perception of time larger than a very near future. And this narrowness and constriction is also present in the language. Also, Grace's analysis is European in that the vertical line which intersects with the horizontal is part of the European tradition of literary theory. In Wiebe's novel, the form of the line used to describe the Cree world is the curve. These literary models are not well suited to the Indigenes' holistic approach to and interpretations of their environment.

But the problem of logic in this novel remains unsolved. Allan Dueck writes that Wiebe, "convinces the white reader that the Indian perspective makes infinitely more sense than the white view."[15] To say that white speech is rational and Native speech alogical is erroneous. Many of the comments made by Big Bear are logical and rational like those found in white discourse. For example, when he states during the trial that he understands exactly what has happened to his people since the arrival of the whitemen, his discourse is very logical, that is, he speaks in terms of cause and effect. Big Bear tells the judge that,

> "This land belonged to me. When I had it I never needed your flour and pork. Sometimes I was stiff with Indian agents who looked at me as if I was a child and knew less than a child. Before many of you were born I ran buffalo over this place where you have put this building, and white men ate the meat I gave them. I gave them my hand as a brother; I was free, and the smallest Person in my band was as free as I because the Master of Life had given us our place on the earth and that was enough for us. But you have taken our inheritance, and our strength. The land is torn up, black with fires, and empty. You have done this. And there is nothing left now but that you must help us. (p. 398)

Big Bear is able to think logically, in terms of cause and effect, and he can also speak alogically, using parables and metaphors. It appears that this is a combination of the horizontal and vertical, and by joining the end of the lines, a circle is formed. Grace does state that the Native discourse is predominantly referential, but she fails to mention the actual holistic content of their speech.

Also, in oral cultures, speech is qualified with specific attributes during important events which includes opening and closing formulas. When Big Bear has finished telling the story of his vision, each chief rises, and states, "I thank Big Bear ... for everything he has told us" (p. 66). Also, when Little Bad Man has something important to tell his father, he begins by saying, "I have something to say", the father replies, "I am hearing" (p. 181-2), which tells his son to speak and that he will be heard. This sounds like the language of proposition, but it is actually a formulaic opening, like a salutation in a letter. There are overlapping areas between oral and written cultures and Indigene discourse contains both metaphors and the characteristics of metonymy.

In the literary criticism concerned with Wiebe's novel, diverse comments relate to the religious and spiritual quality of the novel. Many critics see Big Bear as a Christ or Christ-like figure, and he has been described as the only true Christian in the novel. He speaks in parables and metaphors like Christ. But Glenn Meeter states that

> If Big Bear is such a figure - the Christlike Man, the Disciple - it must be a still more purely inner and essential matter, since he has not even the accent of a Christian terminology and tradition. His Christlike qualities must derive from his conscious following of his own tradition, one for which Wiebe finds Scriptural authorization in the book's epigraph from Acts 17.[16]

Leslie Monkman thinks that Wiebe succeeds in presenting the common aspects of both the Native and the European religions. He writes that Cree religion is used

> not simply as an alternative to white religion but as a source of values and beliefs common to both red and white faiths. ... the book leads white Canadians to a recognition of new world ancestors who embody the essential values of a disregarded Christianity carried from the old.[17]

Even though there are vast differences in their ideologies, there are areas which overlap between the two groups. The epiteth of the novel is better suited to Big Bear's life than to any of the other characters in the work. Acts 17 states that "God who made the world and all that is in it, from one blood created every race of men to live over the face of the whole earth." European supremacy is a concept which is not Christian in origin but the Europeans who adopt this ideology do call themselves Christian. Big Bear's belief in the Great Spirit is an internal and lived religion. And his presence in the last paragraph of the novel connects the life cycle of Big Bear as well as placing him in the larger cycles of both time and earth, memory and history. This is a rather ironic frame for the story: it begins with a quotation from the scriptures representing the Western, Christian, white, and written world and it concludes with the pagan, Cree, and oral world. Allan Dueck writes that

> The whites may speak platitudes about God's goodness and about their religious belief, but their Christianity has no effect on their everyday lives. The Indians, on the other hand, live always in intimate awareness of the Only One ... and assume the Only One's relevance. The most striking evidence of the Indians' intense religiosity comes in Big Bear's own visionary orientation, ... Metaphorical in style, each vision shows the chief's intimacy with the spiritual world and at the same time foreshadows events yet to come in the novel. (pp. 184-5)

If only the Europeans practised their religious beliefs, then a common ground would be established. Big Bear states that he will not go to war with the Whites because the Spirit does not want this to happen. He explains to the tribal leaders that

> "The Spirit must have sent these whites to us so we must find the way He wants us to live with them. We see we cannot fight them. Fighting is good in raids, and makes men, but we know it cannot be His way for us to do nothing but kill. One only becomes

> more manly by killing other men and I don't think American soldiers are men: they have deliberately killed too many women and children. I don't know such a word for them as they are then. The Spirit has given us none, but if men again and again cut up small children, they cannot any longer be men. That's about all that can happen when you fight to wipe out, and I won't let that happen to my People either. ... We must change the treaties. They take too much that The Spirit has given, and return nothing." (p. 105)

This is a much more civilized culture because the future is secured, that is, the children are protected. They do not have a word to name a man who systematically kills children and women because this is unfathomable to Natives. What Wiebe has actually created in the use of religion is parody and it is the whites who parody themselves. Robert Kroetsch writes that

> it is the authority figures - the Queen's representatives, the agents of the East Canadian government - who ride in from the east and begin to parody what they claim to stand for. In this new world, the old stories break down. The systems of law, being used to take the land away from the Indians, become a parody of law. The systems of writing, up against the elaborate oral codes and traditions of the Indians, become parody. Justice itself becomes a parody of justice. And yet the parodic forms, in their single-mindedness, in their greed, triumph, and in the final inversion the forces of "civilization" destroy a prospering civilization that was based on a buffalo economy and the complex inter-relatedness of the Indian tribes and their geography.[18]

A conflict between two cultures is resolved by censoring one culture, thereby eliminating the conflict in the name of God. White hypocrisy is the characteristic parodied in this novel. Moreover, it is this hypocrisy which prevents the novel from becoming fatalistic because a heightened European consciousness would eliminate all conflict, including the conflict within themselves which is projected onto the Indigenes. If the oppressor acted according to his spiritual beliefs, his words would be trustworthy, and he would respect all forms of life thereby eliminating destructive confrontations. But the oppressor's actions are inconsistent with his beliefs and this makes him untrustworthy.

Furthermore, this is the basis of Big Bear's distrust of the written word. The incongruity of the white world is transferred through words onto paper and, from the leader's point of view, words lose all meaning when written. The Natives have signed treaties with the Government but the promises written in the documents have not been fulfilled or have been radically altered. During the council meeting, Big Bear describes what occurred during a treaty gathering with Governor Morris. He tells the tribal chiefs that

> After we had done speaking they placed a paper before us to make our names on, but we refused until they had given us a copy of the words which we could send around among our people to hear what they said, for words written down always say the same thing. But they would not let that; it was not necessary they said, we could trust them, so then we made our names. They went to Battleford and sent back a copy which they left with us, and after they went to Ottawa they sent another copy. And then we found that the words no longer said the same thing; then we found that half the sweet things were taken out and all the sour left in, and we knew we would never stand on the same place with the white man on our land. But to this day we wait for the white man, that he will fulfill his first promise. That is what we know about the treaty. (p. 200)

The Natives do not understand how words can change; the words of the first copy were believed to be static. The treaty was modified by the government, the chiefs were not consulted, and the mistrust of the written word was established. If those words could be so easily changed, then the medium was too unstable to be trusted. Even though the spoken word is ephemeral, it is stable. Once uttered, it cannot be altered. And the Cree Syllabics taught by the missionaries are not trustworthy either because they do not reflect Native speech. When asked if he knows the Cree Syllabics, Big Bear replies: "I knew that once. But when I looked at the paper it always said only what the missionary said, so I forgot them" (p. 144). The script was used to indoctrinate the Natives into the Christian world which, as stated above, has little in common with Native life. The whites were successful in creating complete apprehension of the written word as well as the white spoken word.

In a chapter entitled, 'Genocide: The White Man's Burden' John Moss analyses both Wiebe's and Such's novels. He states that

> Many of our novelists now struggle to give us Canada retroactively, a moral identity rooted in the historical past of the land, by envisioning the disastrous process of confrontation between white and Indian societies which is our undeniable heritage. Several works in this vein are uncannily sensitive, unsettling and beautiful. They have a terrible authenticity which mirrors ourselves in alien ways that strangely belong here more than we do. (Sex and Violence in the Canadian Novel p. 257)

Both novels allow the reader to confront a part of Canadian history which is often unfamiliar and terrifying. Historical justice is rendered in these works because the moral responsibility of the genocide is placed with the Canadian people. They are not blamed for the actual carnage but they are shown the harm that was done in order to colonize this country. Moss writes that

> The Temptations of Big Bear is an intensely moral novel, yet it is not a moral vision. It is a rendering of historical justice, showing the inevitability of one thing following from others regardless of moral consideration: if one set of historical events takes place, others follow. This is not a simplistic cause and effect analysis nor one of preordination but rather inexorable destiny as the result of every turn of events which are separably alterable. Justice is recognition that things happen always in a larger context. There is no blame to be laid, no guilt nor shame; justice is awareness of conditions; not conditions themselves. Wiebe determines to restore to us the history and the justice we have lost through spiritual atrophy. His vision is spiritual in the most humane sense, rather than moral. He endeavours to bind us together with a place, to regenerate community across time, to make the land breathe with the lives of people who have lived on it, to make us responsible each to all and all to everything that is and was. To achieve so much he may have been morally driven, but the effect is spiritual history; just and unnerving and right for us now to know and understand. (p. 259)

Wiebe places the reader within a larger framework emphasizing not only man's relationship with nature and the planet, but with each other. This sense of community, which is also vividly present in Riverrun, is the element which creates empathy and understanding, as well as a sense of loss for a civilization which coexisted in harmony with nature.

In the article, "New Land, Ancient Land," Rudy Wiebe explains how he perceives his relationship with the land. He attempted to portray this in The Temptations of Big Bear by depicting the destructive effects of language. He states that

> Human understanding is tied to language, whose primal expression is naming. The old "Where The Bones Lie" becomes the new "Regina": by naming an Indian place white, we whites have created a new place and it is no longer possible for us to recognize its antiquity. ... when we white people will have clothed the places of this land with words, that is, when we will have named it and inhabited it with a shared memory so that we can make it live again in another person's comprehension, then it will be the ancient land for us that it already is for the Indians. But we should not be so ignorant as to actually believe it truly is a new land; that is as foolish as thinking Columbus first discovered America.[19]

Thinking of Canada as an ancient land with a long history will restore the Native people to their rightful place. They were the first inhabitants of the land and they actually do belong in the Canadian establishment as part of a common ancestry. The Indigenes are not simply 'other'.

Even though many of the perspectives offered in Riverrun and in The Temptations of Big Bear are Native, both authors are white. An Antane Kapesh is a Montagnaise writer who has the courage to recount the cruelties inflicted on her people in the name of colonization. She articulates a lived ordeal under white tyranny which reduced a race of individuals to a degraded and humiliated status in Quebec. Her voice is angry, direct, violent, and uncluttered and she expresses herself in her maternal Montagnais tongue. Time is dramatically condensed in order to dramatize the entire process of subjugation.

In Qu'as-tu fait de mon pays? Kapesh writes a tale about a man who teaches his grandson his way of life, his heritage and traditions. The first two sections describe the laws of their culture, such as respect for the land and for all living things. The old man is described as having

> un très grand respect pour toutes les espèces d'animaux dont il dépendait pour vivre. Jamais il ne gaspillait ni ne tuait sans raison un animal, quel qu'il soit. Il respectait aussi la terre: l'eau, les pierres, le sable et tout ce qui se trouve sur la terre. Il n'abattait jamais un arbre inutilement.[20]

These beliefs, which are also held by the Beothuks and the Crees, are based on a logic of preservation and survival. The grandfather teaches his grandson to master his greed; he should take only what he needs, that is, "il ne prend que ce qu'il peut manger, il n'en ramasse pas inutilement" (p. 20). But he also tells him how to take care of animals:

> Ne les fais jamais souffrir avant de les tuer et ne va jamais jusqu'à les gaspiller en les tuant sans raison car toi aussi, pour des générations à venir, c'est d'eux que tu dépendras pour vivre. Et puis, ne t'empare jamais d'un animal pour le garder en captivité, quel qu'il soit. (pp. 23-4)

This education will allow the child to live in peace with his environment. The word 'inutilement' is important because one of the basic premises is that needless killing is not only disrespectful but it is also a manifestation of greed. The grandfather represents the old traditions, and when he dies, they disappear because at this same time, the French arrive and they lay claim to the land.

The author methodically exposes all of the characteristic behaviours of the oppressor. The first thing that is imposed is a change of spiritual beliefs. The Polichinelle tells the child that

> Ton pays est beau et grand, je ne veux pas te déranger. Je viens pour t'enseigner la religion et je vais te fabriquer un nom. Je te donnerai un nom comme le nôtre. C'est celui-là que tu porteras de génération en génération. (pp. 29-30)

He is introduced to catholicism, his name is changed and then he is forced to learn French. But the Polichinelle first had the child teach him the Native language and spiritual beliefs. Once trust is established, the white man uses this new knowledge to show the child that his world is inferior and primitive, and convinces him to learn French and Catholicism. Wiebe also shows how the Cree syllabics were devised for this same purpose of indoctrination. The child likes both religions but he is unaware that Christianity is a monotheistic belief system which excludes all other forms of worship. Finally he is unable to protect his ancient spirituality and he loses another aspect of his ancestry.

The next stranger he meets gives him clothing, food, and medical aid. The underlying assumption in this type of gesture is the belief that Indigenes are incapable of providing for themselves and this is the first step in the destruction of self-esteem and self-respect. This assumption is based on the arrogance and presumptuous demeanour of the whites toward these people. The child senses this but he cannot verbalize what he feels because this is an attitude which he has never encountered before. The narrator describes that

> L'enfant est gêné et choqué intérieurement mais il ne dit pas un mot.
>
> - Il veut se moquer de moi. Il m'apporte des saletés et des maladies. (p. 34)

His anger is directed toward the objects he is given. The blanket is rough and the boots are uncomfortable, therefore he burns everything. He finds white food to be inedible. He has been told that his clothing and food are unacceptable and he must now conform to the wishes of his captors.

The child is often ignored when important decisions affecting his life are made. For example, he is not consulted when they decide to build on the land and alter the environment even though he knows and understands the land. The tone turns bitter when the narrator begins describing how the child is treated by the whites. The Polichinelle tells his allies that

> - Il se pourrait peut-être qu'il soit plus intelligent que nous. S'il réussit trop bien dans le genre d'études que nous faisons nous-mêmes, il ne cessera de nous importuner plus tard, et il exigera de gagner sa vie de la même manière que nous. Pendant quelque temps, vous lui apprendrez certains sports pour le distraire. Là aussi, il faudra l'avoir à l'oeil: attention qu'il ne devienne meilleur que nous. (p. 47)

Everything is done to make certain that the child does not succeed - he is uncomfortable in his clothes, he is always hungry because he does not like the food he is given, and he is verbally abused. The oppressor needs to keep him subjugated because this is the only way in which he can exercise his power; his position exists only if and when he has a victim.

The deterioration of the child's psyche begins when he journeys into an all-white environment. He is placed in a school where he is made to feel ashamed of who he is. When he leaves the school, he eventually loses his teeth and his eyesight. He is given alcohol and then thrown in jail for being drunk. The Polichinelle tells him that, "[t]u as l'air très fatigué et déprimé. Je vais te donner quelques bouteilles d'alcool pour te faire oublier ton ennui" (p. 63). The drug serves to silence him and to keep him under control, to keep him out of the way and to maintain the belief that his drunkeness is due to his inherent inferiority.

This novel is one of the few works written by an indigenous Canadian which offers a vivid depiction of the destruction of the Native psyche resulting from the unjust and immoral treatment by the Québécois. The child tells the Polichinelle that he does not agree with his name because it arose from the theft of his real name. He asks him:

> Pour quelle raison es-tu venu ici sans être invité? C'est toi qui avais besoin de moi, n'est-ce pas? Encore là, tu voulais dissimuler et mentir. C'est pourquoi tu ne m'as parlé de rien à ton arrivée. Tu as préféré me voler, rien que pour pouvoir t'appeler QUEBECOIS. Crois-tu pouvoir me leurrer? Même si, jusqu'à la fin des temps, tu ne fermes jamais le bec et que tu continues à crier partout, à la radio et à la télévision, que tu te nommes QUEBECOIS, jamais je ne serai d'accord avec toi. Après ton arrivée,

> si tu m'as forcé à être ton concitoyen, si tu as voulu te mêler à moi et si tu as changé mon nom, c'est uniquement pour qu'il n'y ait que ton nom à toi qu'on entende, partout, indéfiniment. (p. 79)

The child accuses his oppressor for everything in his life which has been altered since his arrival. He cannot live according to his name since he no longer has a name or a country. He rejects the name Québécois because it is the name of the conquerors and immigrants on the land. As his name was first changed by the French, he now rejects their name of his land.

The novel ends on a note of despair when the child realizes that he cannot recoup what he has lost: "Il avait perdu son territoire entier, tous les aspects de sa culture et même sa langue" (pp. 80-1). The irony at the heart of this story lies in the fact that the Native child is accusing the Québécois of the same violation of rights which the Québécois are accusing the English Canadians of inflicting on them. In Canada, the Natives are located on the last rung of the ladder; they are situated on the bottom level of the hierarchy. As Kapesh describes in her tale, everything was taken from her people and they are left playing a game with their captors. The narrator states that, "[e]t il savait alors qu'à l'avenir, et jusqu'à sa mort, il devrait continuer, bon gré mal gré, à faire le fou avec les Polichinelles et à jouer à leurs polichinelleries" (p. 81). The child feels doomed to live a life of comic posturing, mimicking his benefactors in order to show them how well he is doing by becoming like them. But he will never be accepted as one of them nor will he feel a sense of belonging with the Québécois or with the land. He is alienated, unwanted and ignored in his own country which was overtaken by immigrants.

Qu'as-tu fait de mon pays? offers a graphic depiction of the effects of the application of a reductionist approach to the colonization of a country. The conqueror thinks in terms of dichotomies which carry very distinct appraisals. In this case, the positive side is labelled progress which entails the elimination of the negative primitivism. This is not a matter of degree, but of kind, and any form of compromise is prohibited. By subjugating the land and being ignorant of its importance for survival, the white man is destroying not only the Native people but himself as well. The issue is reduced to a battle between two opposite positions and everyone is defeated. As Moss concludes in his analysis of Wiebe's work, the destruction of this way of life affects everyone. And it is only recently that the repercussions of the brutality inherent in the colonization of Canada are being acknowledged.

NOTES

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2. Peter Such, Riverrun (Toronto: Irwin Publishing, 1973), p. vii. All further references to this work appear in the text.

3. Leslie Monkman, A Native Heritage: Images of the Indian in English-Canadian Literature (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), p. 76. All further references to this work appear in the text.

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15. Allan Dueck, "Rudy Wiebe's Approach to Historical Fiction: A Study of The Temptations of Big Bear and The Scorched-Wood People," in The Canadian Novel: Here and Now, ed. John Moss, Vol. 1 (Toronto: NC Press Limited, 1978), p. 183. All further references to this work appear in the text.

16. Glenn Meeter, "Rudy Wiebe: Spatial Form and Christianity in The Blue Mountains of China and The Temptations of Big Bear," Essays on Canadian Writing, 22 (Summer 1981), p. 57.

17. Leslie Monkman, "The Knowledge of our Origins," Bulletin of Canadian Studies, IV.2 (October 1980) pp. 24, 26.

18. Robert Kroetsch, "Disunity as Unity: A Canadian Strategy," in Canadian Story and History 1885-1985, eds. Colin Nicholson and Peter Easingwood (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1985), p. 8.

19. Rudy Wiebe, "New Land, Ancient Land," The New Land: Studies in a Literary Theme, eds. Richard Chadbourne and Hallvard Dahlie (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1978), p. 4.

20. An Antane Kapesh, Qu'as-tu fait de mon pays?, Trans. Les Traductions Montagnaises Sept-Iles Inc., (Ottawa: Les Éditions Impossibles Inc., 1979), p.10. All further references to this work appear in the text.

CHAPTER TWO

ENACTMENTS OF THE MÉTIS DILEMMA

Historically, the Métis genealogy dates back to the first invasions of the plains by the Europeans who explored the territories. They are the offspring of male Europeans and female Natives. In The Anatomy of Racism: Canadian Dimensions, David Hughes writes that

> One distinctively Canadian population about whose evolution we can be far more certain is that of the Métis. The term métis, meaning "mixed" is a French cognate of the Spanish term mestizo. The mixture referred to is that resulting from intermarriage between people of European origin (mainly French Canadian) and indigenous Canadian peoples such as the Cree Indians. ...They are a coherent community, with a long history, and recognize few Indian or European kin.[1]

They are the unacknowledged settlers of the land and the Métis themselves became separate from other Native tribes forming their own band as early as 1670[2]. Yet the Canadian government, under the leadership of Pierre Elliot Trudeau, acknowledged the Métis as a separate group only as recently as 1981, three hundred years after they had themselves declared autonomy. Moreover, the 1982 edition of the Concise Oxford Dictionary defines métis as, "offspring of white person and Amer. Indian, esp. in Canada." In this work, the term Métis will be employed in the way designated by the Métis people themselves.

In Tchipayuk ou le Chemin du Loup, Ronald Lavallée tells the story of a Métis protagonist introduced as a young boy who has been betrayed by his mother. On the first page of the text, the narrator states that, "Askik Mercredi se mit à pleurer. Il avait six ans, et il était trahi."[3] This allusion to betrayal recurs consistently throughout the novel. Askik is a Métis who feels forsaken by his own people, by other Native groups, and also by the white community. The duality of the 'sang-mêlés', as the Métis are called, is elaborated in the first section of the work entitled, 'La plaine'. In the second chapter, 'La forêt,' Askik's alienation and rejection by the Natives is portrayed. His predicament as an outsider in Quebec is discussed in the third part, 'Vieilleterre'. The fourth and final section is entitled, 'La Plaine' where Askik returns to his homeland after his long journey in search of his dream to become a great man. He has learned to accept the fate of his heritage when he decides to live as, and among his people, the Métis, completing the circle of his quest.

The character of Askik epitomizes the individual's attempt to alter his identity and his fate. Raoul Mercredi, Askik's uncle, becomes one of his idols. He is described as 'un géant en manteau de loup' (p. 19) emphasizing the amount of power and wealth he has acquired in contrast to the relative poverty of his brother's family. But it also points to the manner in which Raoul attained his position. The narrator states that

> Vingt-cinq ans de traite chez les Indiens avaient fait de lui un homme dur, riche, et profondément méfiant. Contrairement à la moyenne de ses compatriotes, il avait le sens de l'épargne et du placement. Alors que ses anciens compagnons s'usaient encore dans les portages, lui vivait en maître dans la colonie. Il avait de la fortune. Il plaisait aux femmes, et parlait d'égal à égal avec les Anglais de la Compagnie. Voilà ce qui s'appelle veiller à ses affaires. (p. 19)

Raoul Mercredi made his money illegally by selling pelts to the Americans. And he is respected and influential within the Métis community because he is able to deal with the people from the Hudson's Bay Company on their own level. They in turn allow him to smuggle pelts as long as he keeps the Métis under control. This man is a cunning opportunist who cares only about his well-being which allowed him to become powerful and rich.

Askik realizes that members of the clergy also have power and riches. Their residence is called 'le palais épiscopal' (p. 13) and the young child perceives them as exalted beings, and, therefore, they should be obeyed. But this leads to a conflict because he fears disobeying the deities of his religion as well as the teachings of the priests. When his mother asks him to help the spirit of Mouchoum to leave the earth, Askik is afraid of being caught by the priests and he wonders if "[c]e qu'ils faisaient était donc mal? ... Il en voulut à sa mère de l'avoir placé en travers des prêtres" (p.

23). He does not want to alienate the priests because he fears them, yet he does not want the tchipayuk to haunt him.

Askik dreams of becoming 'un grand homme'. By the age of seven, he has decided what he wants to do with his life. He tells his friend Mona:

> - J'veux être instruit, ... J'veux plus avoir peur de personne. J'veux vivre dans une grande maison, comme les prêtres. ... - J'veux être un grand homme! souffla-t-il enfin. Mona ramena les yeux sur lui. Elle ne témoigna pas la moindre surprise. - Tu le seras, dit-elle simplement, si tu le veux. Mais tu ne le voudras peut-être pas. (pp. 119-20)

Mona's character is antithetical to Askik. She has accepted her fate as a Métisse by living on the prairie and not in Saint-Boniface, and she has no dreams of grandeur. Askik wants to return to town to continue his education, but he would also like to continue living with the Sioux who took care of him after he was lost in the forest. He is torn between various worlds; choosing the one in which he wants to reside is difficult. But the world of the town, his uncle and the church has the strongest attraction; he is bewitched by power and riches because they seem to eliminate fear.

In the second part of the novel, Askik learns to live like an Ojibway. As a medicine woman, Pennisk teaches him the basic concepts of the Midewiwin from the story of creation to the importance of Kitché-Manitou, the Supreme Being, and the manidos. These teachings contain codes of behaviour such as appropriate social and moral conduct. Pennisk tells Askik that

> - Aucun homme ne commence à vivre avant de recevoir sa vision. Quand tu auras la tienne, marche toujours selon ses enseignements. Des tentations t'en détourneront. Souviens-toi alors des lois de la société, et tu reviendras fidèlement à ton chemin. Un comportement droit prolonge la vie. L'homme sage n'attire pas l'attention. Il a des manières tranquilles, un discours sombre; il réfléchit avant d'agir. Il est un père pour le peuple, et ne refuse pas à celui qui est dans le besoin. Ainsi, à force d'étude et de renoncement, il s'élève dans les degrés de la connaissance, et s'approche du Grand Mystère. (p. 182)

There is a strong emphasis on learning but these teachings are based on an ideological viewpoint which is the exact inverse of European thought. Pennisk states that man is the weakest being because he depends on all others to survive. The story of creation is narrated as

> Kitché-Manitou créa d'abord la Terre, les plantes, et les animaux. Ensuite seulement il créa l'Homme, le plus faible, car il dépend de tous les autres pour vivre. (p. 163)

She attempts to instill a sense of humility in the child and to remove the arrogance he acquired in his village. All things do not belong to him, and he should respect every form of life as well as express gratitude to the manidos for what he is given and what he takes. Other facets of her teachings state that the child should

> Ne méprise aucune forme de vie. Respecte-les toutes. Même les plus faibles ont leur pouvoir. Et toi, tu es le plus faible de tous. Tout ce que tu recevras te sera donné. Prends ce qu'on te donne. Sois reconnaissant. (p. 164)

During his stay with Pennisk, Askik learns the traditional values of his Native heritage. But in the end, he becomes confused about his place in this world and in the next. He wonders where the Métis go after death; he knows that there is a heaven for the Whites and the Natives but he is unaware if a such exists for the Métis. Moreover, Pennisk is unable to help him. She wonders, "Mais où vont les Métis? Je ne sais pas" (p. 206).

The child also learns about the history of the land and the changes which occurred after the arrival of the Europeans. The name 'Ojibway' is incorrect and Pennisk warns Askik:

> - Ne dis pas "ojibwé". C'est le nom que nous donnent les étrangers. Dis plutôt "anichnabègue", qui veut dire: les Hommes-faits-de-rien. Car Kitché-Manitou ne nous a pas tirés des quatres substances, mais de ses rêves. (p. 158)

Beginning with the difference in her name, she continues to explain how a way of life slowly disappears as the Whitemen lay claim to the land. The end result is a distrust of the Native leaders as happens with the Cree people in The Temptations of Big Bear. Pennisk tells the child of the 'anichnabègue' customs of a near past:

> Autrefois, les Anichnabègues vivaient en paix avec les gens de la forêt. Ils prenaient selon leurs besoins. En retour, les animaux se laissaient prendre. Mais des maladies inconnues, effrayantes, ont fait leur apparition. C'est pourquoi les Anichnabègues ont perdu foi dans leurs hommes-médecine. C'est pourquoi ils se comportent comme des êtres sans vision. C'est pourquoi Kitché-Manitou ne refait plus les castors et les rats musqués. (p. 169)

The only hope for these people is the exodus of the White man; they have been spiritually and emotionally broken. The repercussions of the collision of two distinct ideologies has led to a loss of faith in the Ojibway people. They can no longer live in the forest since there is no game; the buffalo has been slaughtered for the value of its fur. Moreover, the Europeans have attempted to subdue nature, thereby creating a desolate world for the Natives. A system of commerce is established, and the medicine men are powerless to alter any of these impositions. The leaders are no longer respected by their people and, as Pennisk asserts, the disadvantages outweigh the benefits: "Les violons et les marmittes, ça ne suffit pas..." (p. 202). As in Riverrun, the leaders and elders are responsible for transmitting traditions and knowledge within the society. When they are no longer trusted, the oral culture vanishes.

Although the Europeans have changed the names of the Native people, they have often used indigenous words for the land they have vanquished. Manitoba comes from the word 'manitou' which is a deity for some Native tribes. In an article entitled "La Conquête du Nord-Ouest, 1885-1985: or The Imperial Quest of British North America," Jean Morisset discusses this practice when he writes that

> The Métis plea for a special Métis/Native type of jurisdiction had resulted in the formation of the province of Manitoba of 1870. But instead of working out a new type of provincehood, British North America set up a provincial status for Manitoba that was somewhat like Quebec's, with provisions for the use of French as under the federal jurisdiction. In reality, the dominant language of the north-west was called le metiff. ... The conquerors were skilful indeed in accepting

> native names, such as Manitoba or Saskatchewan. In so doing they co-opted the aboriginal people into being assimilated under a name of their own. For a "Manitoban" was not only a "son of the Land of the Manitou," he was also a product of the British North American state.[4]

The conquerors know how to make use of Native names, when to change them and when to call them into existence. The act of giving indigenous names to the provinces is manipulative. It exposes the conquerors' brutality and total disregard for Natives; they steal land from a group of people killing many of them in the process and then the land is given the name of a deity cherished by the people they have slaughtered. Exploitation at the hands of the Whites is expressed in a myriad of policies.

When diverse cultural communities live in the same region, linguistic difficulties are inevitable, especially when one group decides that the other group's language is uncivilized. When Askik ventures into town to get the priest, he has trouble making himself understood because he speaks a mixture of French and Cree while the priest only speaks French. And this problem is further exacerbated after he lives with Pennisk who teaches him the Ojibway language and culture. Upon his arrival in Montreal, his spoken French is unacceptable and his knowledge of both Cree and Ojibway is worthless because it is not part of the curriculum. His friend De Meauville states that

> On l'a découvert un matin accroché à la grille de la place d'Armes. Il arrivait tout droit de la Rivière Rouge, en canot s'il vous plaît. Ce n'était

> pas le premier Métis à faire des études chez nous - Louis Riel en est un autre - mais Mercredi était bien différent. Il parlait mal le français, et ce qu'il avait comme croyances faisait lever les cheveux des bons pères. Farouche. Ne parlait à personne. Toujours seul. Il ne recevait jamais de nouvelles de ses parents. Un matin, au dortoir, les pères l'ont surpris à dormir sur le plancher: il n'avait pas l'habitude des paillasses. Ils lui ont enlevé sa robe de bison, il a mordu un père au mollet! Les punitions le laissaient froid. Au début, les autres l'appelaient le p'tit sauvage, ou le Métchiffe, en se moquant de son accent. Mais il s'attaquait à n'importe qui, même les plus grands. Et comme il fallait l'assommer pour qu'il se tienne tranquille, on fini par lui laisser la paix. M'étonne qu'il ne soit pas mort de chagrin ces premières années! (p. 261)

Furthermore, Askik's initiation into white civilization is characterized by a lack of understanding and compassion on the part of both the teachers and the students. The child learns to be violent in order to protect the little dignity that he has left. The languages of his family and friends, his cultural and spiritual beliefs are all unacceptable and even his name is taken away from him and he becomes Alexis Mercredi. The child is stripped of everything that was of any importance and value. According to De Meauville, the only thing that allowed Askik to survive was "sa rage d'apprendre" (p. 261).

Askik's sense of worth is based on his early life experiences on the prairie. When he attempts to interest Elisabeth, he realizes that his charms are different from those declared by Hubert. The narrator writes that

> Askik enviait l'aisance du jeune agent de change. Lui, n'avait pas cette facilité, ne trouvait jamais le mot aimable ou le geste qu'il fallait. Son

> charme, sa valeur, se disait-il, était tout autres. A ces moments-là, tout son passé lui remontait à l'esprit et Askik s'imaginait volontiers plus courageux, plus résistant que les hommes qui l'entouraient. Ils avaient de jolies manières et pouvaient réciter des vers de mémoire, mais avaient-ils eu froid et faim comme lui, avaient-ils affronté des ours, côtoyé des guerriers sioux? Askik devenait plus silencieux, plus brusque et tranchant, croyant ainsi se rendre intéressant. En fait, on se demandait quelle mouche l'avait piqué. (pp. 270-1)

The young man is unable to grasp the basic rules of social intercourse and his attempt to alter his behaviour leads to a misinterpretation of his intentions. Acts of bravery on the prairie have no value in this world. Even though he no longer has an accent and he tries to behave according to social dictates, he feels uncomfortable.

At one point, he perceives himself as an interesting oddity. When he is called "un bon p'tit sauvage" (p. 308) after a public announcement of his position as steward for the Sancy estate, he thinks that

> C'est vrai qu'il était différent d'eux, qu'il venait de très loin. Mais pourquoi en avoir honte? C'est ce qui lui donnait sa valeur! Jamais, plus jamais, il ne cacherait son origine métisse! Ah comme il accomplirait de grandes choses pour ces hommes et femmes qu'il aimait! Comme il les rendrait fiers de lui! (p. 309)

Askik's feelings of self-worth originate from others and not from himself. At this particular time, it seems that the Métis are acceptable; therefore, he will emphasize his origins. But this is a patronizing and condescending attitude and Askik falls victim to it. Whether an individual is liked or hated solely on the basis of his skin colour denotes prejudice. What has occurred in the exchange is that Askik has been reduced to an accomplishment. Sancy is proud of the fact that he has changed a savage into a semi-civilized person. And the expression 'bon petit sauvage' emphasizes the reality that Askik has been reduced to the status of a child.

In the 1880's, Montreal was considered to be an English city, and the young lawyer recognizes that the English will always govern because the French only think of their themselves and their immediate concerns. Askik thinks that

> Voilà le problème du Québec, ... Un peu de pêche, un peu de culture, un peu de chasse. Ils consomment ce qu'ils récoltent et ne produisent rien pour l'exportation. Une économie de subsistance en plein XIXe siècle. Et ils se demandent ensuite pourquoi les Anglais mènent tout. Non, c'est pis encore: ils ne se le demandent même pas. (p. 324)

Being an outsider, Askik is able to observe and note the difficulties and ambiguities of the culture as well as understand the peculiarities of the dominant culture. This attitude is further exemplified when Askik confronts the local priest and accuses him of keeping the parishioners in a state of poverty and compliance. He tells the priest that

> - C'est précisément cette façon de penser, l'abbé, qui nous tient à genoux devant les Anglais. Cette manière de rapetisser les choses. De se contenter de s petite vie, de ses petites manières! ... Tant que nous dédaignerons les affaires, les Anglais mèneront tout au Canada. Tant que nous nous contenterons de prier pour de bonne récoltes au lieu de fumer convenablement le sol, nous achèterons leurs produits au lieu de vendre les nôtres. Tant que nous nous satisferons d'un petit pain, le gros sera pour les autres! (p. 332)

The reply to these comments is of the standard form, that is, the people of Québec are patient and enduring. But Askik interprets this as a way of avoiding the issue. As in Saint-Boniface, the clergy is very powerful and their influence, especially with the peasants and the poor, is boundless. And Askik, who as a child revered and feared the clergy, now clearly sees the destructive effects of this authority on the entire population.

His relationship with the Sancy family is peculiar. The mother thinks of him as a son, the daughter loves him as a brother yet the father denies any familial feelings toward him. Their relationship is purely a business matter. Vieilleterre will be given to Askik so that he can manage it but Eugène Sancy does not want any emotional ties with him. He is interested in his sharp business acumen because he thinks like the English. These doctrines contrast sharply with Pennisk's teachings and Ashis Nandy explains the basis of this ideology in The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism. The author states that

> the drive for mastery over men is ... a world view which believes in the absolute superiority of the human over the nonhuman and the subhuman, the masculine over the feminine, the adult over the child, the historical over the ahistorical, and the modern or progressive over the traditional or the savage.[5]

Askik adopts this perspective in order to be successful. He betrays himself by attempting to eliminate everything native, from a natural respect for the land and people, to his language and memories. Man is now more important than the earth, the plants and the animals.

But the longer Askik lives in the white world, the more he comes to realize the hypocrisy, the intolerance and the brutality of that way of life. When he is rejected by the Sancy family as a son-in-law, he reevaluates his position and this ultimately leads to his dismissal. Eugène Sancy took in and trained Askik so that he could be useful to him. Moreover when Mr. Sancy engages him, he tells him that,

> Je te demande de veiller aux biens de ma famille, pendant quelque temps. Ce n'est pas trop demander, j'espère?
>
> Il n'ajouta pas: "Après tout ce que j'ai fait pour toi", mais la phrase était là, palpable, entre eux deux. (p. 311)

The man wants Askik to be indebted to him so that he can control him. Their relationship is purely practical: the land owner needs a steward for his estate and, by making Askik indebted to him, the ownership is complete. Sancy never accepted him as a member of the family because he is native; to him, the young man is a commodity. According to David Hughes, this is an example of racial discrimination which is defined as an

> act or practice or granting or denying members of particular ethnic categories or groups access to life chances (opportunities or rewards) because of their assumed physical, cultural and/or behavioural characteristics... (The Anatomy of Racism, p. 105).

Askik eventually realizes that he can never be an influential and powerful man in Canada because "[j]e suis, et je serai toujours, pour les Canadiens, un sauvage" (p. 399). He is not wanted in that world because of his skin colour and his ancestry, and he is powerless to alter these characteristics. Racial discrimination seems omnipotent.

In this novel, the English are portrayed in various ways. The Métis insurrection is presented as a golden opportunity for the British military and Colonel Garnet Wolseley's career benefits greatly. He is described as a man who thinks that, "il avait généralement raison, les autres avaient ordinairement tort" (p. 237). This self-righteous attitude is also directed against the French-speaking volunteers from Québec, whom Wolseley does not want in his army. Finally, there are the 'orangistes' who hate the French, the Natives and the Métis. Lavallée also portrays the rigid upbringing of English Canadians when Simpson informs Grandet that, "[m]a famille, ... est d'humeur belliqueuse. La vie militaire est chez nous une tradition. Et une exigence" (p. 413). Yet Simpson is a compassionate character who understands the problems in Canada at that time even though he is rather idealistic. He speaks of Canada as a refuge for all races, but Askik remains sceptical. He does not understand why anyone would want to live in Canada when he asks his friend:

> - Mais qui voudra de votre pays, Simpson? Les Indiens? Ils regrettent la venue des Blancs et rêvent du temps où ils étaient seuls. Les Français auraient préféré que les Anglais ne viennent pas. Les Anglais méprisent les Indiens et les Français, et ressentent les immigrants comme une souillure. Toutes ces races se détestent solennellement et

> voudraient être seules au pays. Alors, dites-moi, Simpson, qui sont vos compatriotes? (pp. 470-1)

After experiencing the prairie and the battle at Batoche, Simpson understands Askik's point of view. He states that he is ashamed of the way the whites have brutally invaded the prairie; he begins to see the Natives as better Christians than the people who claim to be Christians. Critics describe the Native people in The Temptations of Big Bear in a similar way. Moreover, the young soldier is able to identify the hatred which is fuelling this war. He tells Askik that

> -Ce qui se passe ici est horrible. ... la haine, Askik, le mépris qui se sont enracinés ici! Ce refus malveillant, inconditionnel de l'autre... Et chez des gens si ordinaires, si humains à tout autre égard... il a fallu que je vienne ici pour croire au Démon. La médiocrité méchante, je crois, est sa marque. (p. 484)

Simpson decides to become a historian and to leave his law practice. His illusions of harmony were shattered when he saw the malice at work in a racial war. 'Unconditional hate' is characteristic of this type of discrimination, and it also seems to be omnipotent when seen as one group confronting another. But when two individuals of different racial backgrounds meet face to face, the feelings are different. Simpson asks Askik if he hates English people, and the young Métis replies:

> \- J'ai souvent haï les Anglais. En groupe. Individuellement, c'est plus difficile.
> \- Alors, c'est ainsi que nous bâtirons notre pays. En recrutant une personne à la fois. (p. 484)

Simpson concludes that even with the intense hatred against the Natives, the two groups could live peacefully if individuals could meet face to face and get to know one another.

Newspapers are highly criticized for the way in which they report the facts, and at times, they are even ridiculed in the novel. This is important in light of the knowledge that these alleged facts become part of Canadian history. While discussing the altered picture of Thomas Scott in the store windows, Prosy informs Askik that

> - Il n'était pas encore martyr. C'était un vaurien, méprisé de ses propres gens. Mais il était blanc et protestant, et Riel est métis et catholique. Je te laisse tirer les conclusions. (p. 426)

Scott was unknown before being killed by Riel. In the description of the insurrection, there are inconsistencies and adjustments or justifications; this is in direct violation of the ethics of journalism which stresses the objective reporting of facts. The narrator states that

> Certains journaux aussi laissaient entendre que les Métis avaient - peut être - des griefs valables. Mais on s'empressait d'ajouter que rien ne justifie le recours aux armes. (p. 426)

The newspaper is playing the role of judge by evaluating the facts. When public opinion shifts to the side of the Métis, Askik miraculously acquires a new past. L'Époque prints that

> il était né d'un seigneur canadien et d'une mère siouse, ... il avait reçu une éducation hors-pair à Saint-Boniface, et avait passé sa vie à se battre

> contre les Indiens et à lire L'Époque. (pp. 462-3)

The distrust of the printed word is further exacerbated. But there are more serious misrepresentations of fact. The massacre in Batoche where old men, women and children were killed is called the victorious battle that ended the insurrection. Most soldiers did not see the enemy yet it was reported as a "triomphe" and the victors "fêteraient volubilement la défaite de l'ennemi" (p. 492). The making and the recording of history are presented as a subjective and, very often, an inaccurate and intentionally deceiving endeavour.

On his return to the prairie, Askik notices that the land has been altered. In order to prevent an American invasion of the grain belt, the Canadian government enforced zealous immigration policies. The narrator draws an analogy when he states that

> Comme un champignon qui n'était pas la veille, et qui étonne au matin, Winnipeg était né en une nuit. Engendré par le chemin de fer, allaité par la spéculation, nourri par l'immigration. On y parlait une cinquantaine de langues. Le Canada voulait peupler au plus vite son arrière-pays, pour l'interdire aux États-Unis. ... On acceptait de tout, à condition que cela fût blanc. Les Chinois, importés en masse pour aider à la construction du chemin de fer, étaient redevenus des indésirables. (p. 458)

The concept of white supremacy was applied in populating the west and this event was motivated by greed, that is, the desire to acquire land. And the assailants completely changed this land which now mirrors their appearance:

> La plaine d'autrefois n'existait plus. Il y avait la même terre rase, les mêmes étendues. Mais c'était un sol noir, labouré, étrillé, qui perçait entre les plaques de neige fondante. Les grandes herbes folichonnes avaient été renversées et enterrées. On ne pouvait imaginer un wetiko se promenant dans ces terres à blé. Ni de Métis.
>
> Voilà ce qui manquait. De l'ancienne colonie métisse, française, il ne restait plus que le caractère français, renforcé par l'arrivée de colons québécois. L'élément métis s'était envolé en emportant ses tchipayuk. Le pays avait désormais la mine sage, besogneuse, et un peu pâle de ses nouveaux maîtres. (pp. 459-60)

The land has been settled, it is compliant like its owners and it lacks character. Even the spirits have vanished and so has the past. Later, Askik wonders how a nomadic people will survive on this land: "on a été nomade pendant quarante mille ans" (p. 485), and now Métis history vanishes because the land no longer exists. Their home has been destroyed.

Not only has the land changed, but Askik's thought processes are deeply altered. He no longer speaks his maternal language with the ease he once had and he experiences the dilemma of an individual caught between two civilizations. He feels alienated from both. When Askik first encounters members of his race, the narrator describes that

> Askik retrouvait avec émotion les regards métis, baissés par politesse, les manières lentes et posées, le parler chantonnant des femmes de sa race. Il désespérait de les comprendre si mal. Il apprenait soudain que si le dialecte des Métis fait de larges emprunts au français, sa logique et son rythme sont intimement indiens. Or, non seulement Askik ne parlait plus le cri, mais il avait perdu cette fluidité d'esprit qui met de l'intuition dans

> l'ordre, et du goût dans la règle. Autant le français lui avait paru tatillon par sa rigidité, autant sa langue maternelle lui semblait maintenant évanescente et floue. (pp. 492-3)

The differences between the two languages confuses the young man who attempts to retrieve the smooth flow of thought of the Métis. He feels an outsider in his own world because he sought to abandon his Native heritage.

At the end of the novel, Askik has a vision of the future of his people, realizing that

> Pour la première fois depuis son retour, Askik voyait la plaine sans attendrissement. Il la voyait telle qu'elle était, avec ses chasseurs démoralisés, ses enfants illettrés, ses tipis crasseux, ses peuplades trébuchant au seuil d'un avenir malveillant. ... Que leur réservait l'avenir des Blancs: la tuberculose, l'alcool, les emplois sordides. ... Lui qui avait appris à marcher dans le monde des Poilus, allait-il tendre la main à Mona, à ses enfants, à tous ses frères de race? Leur misère l'effrayait. (p. 501)

Life on the prairie near Saint-Boniface is impossible and the Métis emigrate to Saint-Paul. Askik knows that there is no hope for these people; they will lead wretched lives. Their land has been stolen, their way of life is ridiculed, and their very existence is deemed worthless. As Askik has learned, the White world does not want them and other Native tribes are also having difficulty surviving. The future is bleak for all, including the land.

Askik is exposed to all the various segments of his heritage and none are portrayed in a promising light. The Native cultures are slowly disappearing, the 'Canadiens' are tyrannized by both the clergy and the government, and both the French and English Canadians are not only arrogant, but they hate his people. The only thing he can do is to return home. He had left his home with dreams of being a great man and he comes back defeated. He thinks that

> Il allait tirer un trait sur quinze années d'efforts et rentrer chez lui comme il était parti: sans position, et sans argent. ... Après tant d'humiliations, une partie de son être se rebiffait encore. ... Mais il était perdu. ... Askik allait rentrer chez lui. Parce qu'il avait la nostalgie du pays, mais surtout, parce qu'il était battu et que ce n'était pas la peine d'insister. Sauvage un jour, sauvage toujours. (p. 425)

Askik's education is of little value on the prairie, and he sees all those years of diligent study as having been wasted on him. He perceives himself as a failure because he could not adapt to the white world even though he was living in an environment which was totally at odds with his racial identity and the wisdom of Pennisk. The key phrase here is, '[i]l était perdu' which is what he kept repeating in a dream when he was lost. The fox replied, "[n]on, tu es ici" (p. 114) meaning that he would not be lost if he is true to himself by accepting his heritage. Finally, he could no longer play the role of the great man and his façade crumbled. He no longer desires to emulate his uncle Raoul or the priest; their power and riches are illusory. After spending fifteen years hunting for a future and a fantasy, and running away from his past and from reality, he returns to the prairie completing the cyclic movement of his quest.

In an interview, Lavallée states that he wrote the novel in part to portray the ambiguous relationships which exists between the various cultural groups, but also to understand a part of history which differed from present day behaviour toward the Métis. He writes that

> On vivait sur des terres ayant appartenu aux métis, on glorifiait leur passé, leur culture, leurs traditions; mais rien ne nous faisait plus honte que d'être confondus avec les métis par les anglophones, ... Je lisais, dans les livres d'école, que les Canadiens français avaient été plus justes envers les métis et les Amérindiens, mais je voyais bien, en regardant autour de moi, que notre attitude envers nos cousins métis n'était pas plus égalitaire ni fraternelle. Il semblait y avoir une scission totale entre la manière dont on traitait les métis historiques qui étaient, semble-t-il, de grands héros, et ceux qui vivaient encore avec nous, qu'on exploitait et méprisait. Alors, tout naturellement, j'en suis venu à écrire ce livre sur les origines des rapports ambigus entre les Canadiens français, les Canadiens anglais et les métis.[6]

Belief and action are seen as contradictory and Lavallée manages to shed some light on this attitude expressed towards Métis. Also, he reinterprets part of Canadian history by presenting the events through the eyes of Askik.

The characters of Jules and Pique Tonnerre in Margaret Laurence's The Diviners render a more contemporary portrait of the plight of marginal social groups in Canadian society. In this novel, the members of the Tonnerre family are Métis or halfbreeds as they are called by the local townspeople. Yet the name Métis is inaccurate and of unknown origin to Lazarus Tonnerre. Jules tells Morag a tale told to him by his father about his grandfather, Rider Tonnerre:

> Another thing is that Rider was also called Prince of the Braves. He wasn't all Indian, though. He was Métis, only back there, then, our people called themselves Bois-Brûlés. Burnt wood. I dunno know why. Maybe the fires they made to smoke the buffalo meat. Maybe their own skins, the way they looked.[7]

Like the Cree, the Ojibway and the young boy in Kapesh's tale, the Métis have also lost their name. These people have been named other than what they are and the significance of their true name is now lost. The racial slur, halfbreed, like many such expressions, is also incorrect. The Métis were formed in the seventeenth century; therefore, they are no longer half Native. But, as notes Terry Goldie, "the valorizing term has usually not been Métis but "half-breed," a product of debased sexuality" (Fear and Temptation, p. 69); the coupling of a Native with a White person is repugnant to many.

According to the social hierarchy of Manawaka, the Métis are a group rejected by the Whites. Being marginal, they live on the periphery of the town, and the local citizens belittle them. This attitude towards the Métis is summarized by the narrator when she states that

> The Tonnerres (there are an awful lot of them) are called those breeds, meaning halfbreeds. They are part Indian, part French, from away back. They are mysterious. People in Manawaka talk about them but don't talk *to* them. Lazarus makes home brew down there in the shack in the Wachakwa valley, and is often arrested on Saturday nights. Morag knows. She has heard. They are dirty and unmentionable. (p. 69)

Métis people are labelled socially unacceptable by the English-speaking inhabitants of the small Manitoba town. They are called mysterious and no attempt is made to resolve the mystery by talking to them and trying to understand them. This is not possible because they are thought to be dirty; therefore, they cannot be touched or approached, making it impossible to bridge the distance between the two groups. The presence of the Métis is shrouded in silence; they are 'unmentionable'. Of Jules, the narrator writes that "[h]e comes from nowhere. He isn't anybody" (p. 70). Accordingly, since he has no history, he lacks any significance, and is thereby fated to social alienation.

The Tonnerre children are forced to learn the language of the dominant cultural group and, in the process, they learn very little of the dialects of their ancestors. When Morag asks Jules if he knows French, he replies:

> No. Not that much, any more. Not that much, ever. Just a bit, mostly swear words. I guess we used to know a few things when we were kids, but it's mostly gone now. My old man grew up speaking quite a bit of French-Cree, but he's lost most of it now. (p. 139)

The Métis have lost their language when forced to adapt to the social environment of Manawaka. Morag realizes that Jules is not comfortable with the English language because his speech is different. The narrator writes that

> The lost languages, forever lurking somewhere inside the ventricles of the hearts of those who had lost them. Jules, with two languages lost, retaining only broken fragments of both French and Cree, and yet speaking English as though forever it must be a foreign tongue to him. (p. 244)

Even though he speaks the language fluently and he lives in an English environment, there is a residue of the speech of his ancestors which can be found in his utterances. As a child, Morag wonders why he speaks the way he does. She notices that, "[h]e says da instead of the. He talks funny, kind of. He always has. Why?" (p. 72) This language does not seem to belong to him; he speaks it as though he has borrowed it temporarily.

The Métis children are being educated in the white Anglo-Saxon world and, therefore, they should have the same advantages as the English-speaking offspring of Manawakans. Yet when Jules mentions to Mr. Pearl that he wants to become a lawyer, the local barrister dissuades him. The Pearl family, motivated principally by feelings of self-righteous charity, accept Jules into their home in town enabling to boy to continue his education. He is allowed to live according to the dictates of this family, who outwardly act like concerned Christians, but who keep him at bay always aware of his origins. Jules recounts the incident to Morag:

> I got some fancy notion I'd like to be a lawyer, see, on account of if you've always been screwed by people it seemed a good idea to do some of the damage yourself for a change. Right? So I asked old Simon how a guy would get to be a lawyer. He didn't actually laugh out loud, but he kinda covered his mouth with his hand to hide the smile. Then he tells me it's a fine thing to get an education, but a person like me might do well to set their sights a bit lower, and he will ask Macpherson at the BA Garage to take me on as an apprentice mechanic after Grade Eleven. So I walked out. I thought of breaking his jaw, but then I thought it'd only land me in the

> clink and it wasn't worth it. So I went back to the valley. My old man never batted an eye. (p. 135)

Jules, being Métis, is not allowed to achieve the success of the Anglo-Saxons. In Portait du Colonisé, Albert Memmi describes this situation in terms of the colonizer and the colonized. Entrance into a higher level of the hierarchy is refused to the colonized because the colonizer resists acknowledging the possibility of assimilation. If the colonized is assimilated into the colonizer's world, then the hierarchy no longer exists since all people are on the same level. The Métis are 'dirty' and 'unmentionable' and thereby cannot exist on the same level as the Whites. Memmi writes that, "[d]ans les conditions contemporaines de la colonisation, assimilation et colonisation sont contradictoires."[8] Jules is refused entrance into the ranks of the oppressor. He dreams of becoming a lawyer, but Mr. Pearls openly acknowledges that such an endeavour would be ridiculous. The barrister resembles Mr. Sancy who likes Askik only when he can manipulate him. Therefore, in both works, the oppressor retains his position of power since the oppressed is successfully kept at a subordinate level; Jules leaves school and returns down into the valley. And as the local townspeople know, you "need not expect any gratitude from a halfbreed" (p. 127).

Tragedy is the word which best describes the Tonnerre family. The townspeople say that, "the word Tonnerre spells only one thing, Trouble" (p. 136), but this trouble always stems from and leads to misery. The father, Lazarus, dies at the age of fifty-one. Most of his children and some of his grandchildren die young. His daughter Piquette and two young children die in a fire. His son Paul dies in a suspicious accident when he twenty-five and Valentine follows him a few months later at the age of thirty-seven. All had attempted to become assimilated and they have failed miserably.

Jules chooses to live out his life fighting oppression as opposed to withdrawing from the situation, like Jacques, and assimilation is not an option. He tells his daughter that, "[t]oo many have died, ... Too many, before it was time. I don't aim to be one of them. And I don't aim for you to be, neither" (p. 430). He vows never to become like his father. Consequently he leaves Manawaka and spends his life writing and singing songs about the lives of his people. Like his ancestors, he is a nomad but this life style is solitary, as the narrator describes him as

> Skinner Tonnerre, moving through the world like a dandelion seed carried by the wind. Not such a bad way to be, when you considered the alternatives. (p. 272)

And Jules comes to symbolize freedom because he will not live according to white values. Yet he lacks the communal security and sense of belonging of his ancestors.

Leslie Monkman argues that the significance of Jules extends to an embodiment of freedom. The symbol of the horse is associated with him as he recounts the stories of the Metis who are called the 'prairie horselords'. Monkman argues that Jules survives because he accepts his fate as a Métis since

> As a folksinger, he must pander to his white audience's preconceptions of the Indian in order to earn enough money to exist; yet he can accept this masquerade as a necessary condition for having the freedom to sing for his living rather than having to work in a factory: .... His self-respect and freedom result from acceptance of his fate and recognition of how little he can do to alter his fate. His suicide near the end of an inevitably fatal illness is not an act of despair but a final, limited gesture of defiance.[9]

Throughout his life, Jules has been defiant of the white social conventions which is summed up in one phrase, "I don't give a fuck what any of them think" (The Diviners, p. 128). And he lives his life accordingly. Terrence Craig describes his world as

> the ghetto of the Métis, the half-life of the half-breeds, the world in which ambition, hopes, and love remain transient possibilities, and where the only sane reaction to oppression is the defiant scorn of the hopeless. This is a world where racism rules - a world in Canada.[10]

Even his last gesture is one of scorn since his suicide could be interpreted as an act of pride. He wanted to die with at least a vestige of dignity, as stated in Louis Riel's song:

> Mourir, s'il faut mourir,
> Chacun meurt à son tour;
> J'aim' mieux mourir en brave,
> Faut tous mourir un jour. (p. 243)

In death as in life, this man made conscious decisions to control his destiny. Jules decides to work as a folksinger because he needs to be heard. His outbursts of anger when the audience refuses to listen to the songs of his ancestors, and the way he breaks his guitar and becomes drunk after these shows all point to the importance of this need. Jules lacks a place where he can communicate his art; this would eliminate a lot of frustration and then he could sing songs about himself.

According to social standards in Canada, Jules would be called irresponsible even though he is committed to his music. His partnership with Billy Joe is unstable, and he sees his daughter only four times in twenty years. He does not offer financial assistance nor does he attempt to help in any way with her upbringing. He did tell Morag that he would not take responsibility for a child because he is unable to take care of anyone but himself; he is very much aware of the problems he has with intimacy. He tells Morag: "Stay as long as you need to. But not too long, or it'll turn out bad. As I ought to know" (p. 279). He creates his own world and it is neither white nor Métis.

Fire is the element that is associated with the Métis family. George Woodcock writes that

> Fire is in Jules Tonnerre, Morag's first lover and the father of her child Pique. Apart from the fact that his very name is linked to the natural fire of lighting, he is associated in memory with the fire that destroyed his demoralized sister Piquette and her children and which Morag witnesses as reporter for the Manawaka newspaper. Her daughter by Jules is given Piquette's name, perpetuating the link with fire; at the same time, like fire and water, Morag and Jules can never live together,...[11]

The fire in Jules, his passion, is in part a rage, a blinding hatred of something which he cannot grasp. It is directed toward everything and nothing, having its roots in the social injustice which has been a part of his life since birth. This rage is impotent until it is transformed into songs; he expresses himself with both words and sound.

Tonnerre or thunder, the sound which accompanies lightning, can perhaps be more closely associated with the Métis. The sounds uttered by this family are those emitted by people who are suffering in a violent and helpless way. There are numerous references to these vocalizations in the descriptions of the characters. Morag notices that Jules has the best singing voice in their class and his speaking voice has a gravel quality. In her description, Piquette is said to have been

> once slender, has grown flabbily fat and walks with the lurch of the habitual drunk. She has been arrested several times, like her father before her, for outrageously shrieking her pain aloud in public places, usually in the form of obscene insults to whoever happens to be handiest. Her husband took off and left her, just as Skinner said he would, and the two children, two small boys with large solemn dark eyes, appear to be about one- and two-years-old. What went wrong? Or did it go wrong so long ago that there is now no single cause or root to be found? (p. 158)

An answer to this kind of painful outcry is impossible since its origin is no longer known. After witnessing the burning of the shack and the death of Piquette, Morag, "cries in a way she does not remember ever having done before, as though pain were the only condition of human life" (p. 161). The thunder of pain is also expressed by Jules after he learns how his sister dies. The narrator writes that

> Jules lies across the table once more. Then slowly he raises his head and looks at her.
> "By Jesus, I hate you," he says in a low voice like distant thunder. "I hate all of you. Every goddamn one."
> Morag gets up and puts on her coat. There is nothing more can be said. He watches her walk towards the door. Then speaks, the cry wrenched up out of him. "No. Wait awhile, eh?" (p. 275)

When Morag tells Jules how Piquette and her children died in the fire, he feels an impotent rage and hatred towards all whites. He knows that Morag is different but he is unable to separate her from the others in his state of anger. Lazarus is also filled with this rage, as Jules tells Morag that

> I've seen him get so mad, not at anybody, just at everything, that he'll hit his fist against the wall, just hit it, there, until the knuckles bleed. (pp. 141-2)

The sound of thunder represents an inner pain which ranges from extreme sadness, loss, frustration, helplessness, hopelessness to, most importantly, a blinding rage.

When Jules is dying of throat cancer, the rage is still present. On his death bed, Morag notices that his face still has "some residue of the ancient anger, the ancient grief" (p. 446) and his final utterance is described as "[t]he brief sound in the darkness was the sound of a man crying the knowledge of his death" (pp. 446-7). Jules's power lies in his voice and it is through his voice that the truth of the Métis condition is expressed. The symbolism inherent in his imminent death from throat cancer, a disease which will eventually destroy his voice and silence him, seems bleak. In her book, Illness as Metaphor, Susan Sontag argues that "[i]llnesses have always been used as metaphors to enliven charges that a society was corrupt or unjust."[12] She describes cancer as an invasion of the body, a malignant growth which must be excised, and a mythology has evolved to explain the causes of the disease. Sontag writes that

> According to the mythology of cancer, it is generally a steady repression of feeling that causes the disease. In the earlier, more optimistic form of this fantasy, the repressed feelings were sexual; now, in a notable shift, the repression of violent feelings is imagined to cause cancer. ... The passion that people think will give them cancer if they don't discharge it is rage. ... Tolstoy's "The Death of Ivan Ilyich" is often cited as a case history of the link between cancer and characterological resignation. (pp. 22-3)

If, metaphorically, cancer originates from repressed anger, then Jules has very little chance of survival since the sources of this emotion are perpetuated from era to era. The lives of the Métis do not improve; they are always shunned by the mainstream Anglo-Saxon community. In the novel, sound and pain are closely linked; the screaming, yelling, speaking, and singing all express the characters' grief. And throat cancer ends this articulation, finally accomplishing its goal by silencing its victim. But this form of death also implies that Jules is unsuccessful in ridding himself of his rage; his sounds are powerless, and he surrenders to death.

In death, Jules returns to the home of the ancestors; his body is sent to Galloping Mountain to be buried with the other Tonnerres. When his father Lazarus died, Jules wanted to bury him in the valley but he was denied permission to enter the cemetery. Lazarus was Catholic but since he did not practice his religion, he could not be buried in that section or in the Protestant section. Finally, Jules has him buried in the Métis churchyard at Galloping Mountain where the priest does not deny Lazarus his right to a burial. The narrator comments that "[t]he Métis, once lords of the prairies. Now refused burial space in their own land" (p. 268). They are rejected in life, in death and in history.

From the song of Jules Tonnerre to the song of Piquette, the dissemination of a way of life is recounted. Jules' songs begin with the battle of Batoche when the Métis were attempting to save their land from the English. After their defeat Rider Tonnerre becomes symbolic of the Métis. His grandson sings:

> He took his Cross and he took his gun,
> Went back to the place where he'd begun.
> He lived on drink and he lived on prayer,
> But the heart was gone from Jules Tonnerre.
> (p. 459)

Like his father, Lazarus also lives on drink and prayer but he attempts to improve the quality of his life by living within Canadian society. He raises his children away from their ancestors and tries to become assimilated into this other world. And he fails miserably because the Métis are not wanted in the white world.

Even his name depicts his failure as the leader and father of the Tonnerre family. The biblical Lazarus arose from the dead through Christ's intervention but the Tonnerre Lazarus is not resurrected. He drinks heavily to deaden all awareness of the injustice inflicted upon him. But psychic numbing leads to the movement associated with Lazarus; it is one of continual, uninterrupted descent. At the fire, Morag describes him as, "stand(ing) alone, his face absolutely blank, portraying nothing" (p. 159). He becomes more death-like with every description. This man does not have a saviour in the white Christian world; he can only be helped by one of his own. Jules' understanding of his father is expressed in a song and Lazarus is resurrected in a fiction about his life. Even if these songs often go unheard, he is brought back to life after death through his son's psyche. Jules tells Morag that he does not "give very goddamn much about my own life, ... but I sure as hell care more about it because of him" (p. 267); Jules' love for his father is a catalyst. Lazarus cannot propel himself out of the role of victim he was destined to play in Canada at that time but Jules resurrects him in song.

The songs of Jules and Pique tell of the hardships of life as a Métis. Pique sings of inner conflict: 'When I think how I was born/I can't help but being torn' (p. 441). Jules brings up this same concept of separation of self in the song of Lazarus:

> Lazarus was what they called a halfbreed;
> Half a man was what the Town would say.
> What made him walk so slow, well, they didn't care
> to know -
> It was easier by far to look away. (p. 427)

Moreover, this separation is induced by social injustice. Marcienne Rocard describes this phenomena as, "being rejected by an ethno-centric society that considers half-breeds biologically and intellectually inferior to the white race."[13] But the cause of the victimization is placed on the victim himself. The oppressor does not acknowledge responsibility for the harm he has done. What the songs actually do is to communicate the unwritten world of the Métis. Pamela McCallum argues that the songs function as a validation of an 'unmentionable' world and they require a form of social interaction as opposed to the act of reading. This art form is part of the communal world because

> Jules' songs articulate the Métis tales and his own lived experience. Unlike a novel, the songs are an immediately shared social experience. While Morag despairs that she cannot give Pique "a shelf of novels," Jules' songs can be freely given and freely shared. Most importantly, the songs mediate between the chronicles of heroic struggle in the tales of Rider Tonnerre and Old Jules and the actual suffering in the lives of Lazarus, Val and Piquette. Heroic defiance is qualified by genuine pain, while at the same time the possible end of suffering is made concrete in the struggle against oppression. The songs do not elevate suffering to an eternal, unchangeable condition (as, for instance, do the discussions about Gerard Manley Hopkins in Brooke's class); nor do they subsume individual experience in a false universality.[14]

Jules' art form acts as a bridge between the past and the present, but also between social classes. McCallum states that, "[t]he struggle to speak ... is always a struggle within and against social structures" (p. 14). Therefore his songs are also a defiant stance against the oppressor. Sound shatters the silence and the people hear what they would rather ignore.

Laurence presents the spiralling cyclic movement of racism by portraying three generations of Métis who all encounter similar problems. Through Pique, the past is reenacted as she undergoes the same denigrating treatment at school as her father experienced in Manawaka. The offspring of a white and Métis union is a social outcast. Old patterns are transferred to Pique who at school is the victim of racial slurs. When she tells a male student to leave her alone, he replies: "Aw come on, don't give me that shit - you know half-breed girls can't wait to get fucked by any guy who comes along" (p. 422).

Apart from the sexual degradation by the whites, Pique is also aware of the division that is occurring within her. Like Morag, she wants to learn about her ancestry and she tells her mother that, "I don't want to be split. I want to be together. But I'm not. I don't know where I belong" (p. 350). Pique was raised in the white world and she is curious about her Métis past. Like her father, she creates and sings her own songs but she does not want to live his life.

Furthermore, she is as perceptive as her parents; while hitchhiking, she senses the silent anger of the drivers, observing that

> Some times weren't so good. They hate kids hitching, some places. They'd really like you to be dead. Really dead, for real. It's the anger that scares me. ... Because they don't know it's there inside them, ... They think they're sweet reasonableness, and it's you that's in the wrong, just by being, and not being like them, or looking like them, or wanting their kind of life. It's the anger you can feel, even if they don't lay a hand on you. It's, like - well, visible. You can see and taste and smell it. (p. 233)

This anger has the same quality as that of the colonizers in Wiebe's portrayal of Big Bear. Everyone has to adhere to the same rules, look alike and act in the same manner and there is no room for compromise. The ideology of white supremacy endures.

Art is created out of myth which in turn generates myth and there are numerous myths based on one incident. The legends narrated in The Diviners change according to the narrator. For example, the story of Riel differs in Christie's, Morag's and Jules's narration. By placing so many versions of one tale in the novel, Laurence shows how the point of view changes the truth. Here, truth is subjective, or rather, fact and fiction are the same. Marsha Bordner states that

> Lazarus Tonnerre also passes on to his son Jules the stories that are the river to his past. Jules, named after his grandfather, is linked by these tales to Rider Tonnerre and Riel, heroes of a glorious Métis past that has degenerated into an unbearable present. Lazarus, like Christie, feels

> free to embellish and change the legends to suit the occasion. ... The substance of any of the tales ultimately depends upon the point of view of the teller. This essential quality of the oral tradition is perhaps best illustrated by the various versions of the story of Riel. To Lazarus, Riel was a tall man of visionary powers. To Christie, Riel was a short halfbreed who tried to overthrow the government. Morag notes that these two versions of the story of Riel also differ from the history that she has read in school.[15]

The Natives and the Métis express themselves orally since this is traditional and many distrust the medium of print. Lazarus, Jules and Pique emulate this oral tradition, while Morag writes. And they all have a unique rendition of their past. Laurence is affirming the primacy of myth in the lives of the individual over conventional history which is said to be objective and factual.

Morag, as an adult, stands in awe of the pioneers who settled the land, individuals like Catherine Parr Trail and the Cooper family. The stories of the homesteaders are all narratives of bravery, and determination and the characters are god-like. Yet the natural inhabitants of the land, the Natives, are not mentioned. Their acts of bravery and their way of living off the land are of a different kind. The myths of the homesteaders, which recounts the progress of civilization, the conquering and altering of the land making the wilds habitable for humans, are heroic. But the Natives had been thriving on the wild plains until the buffalo were exterminated for the sake of European commerce. As Morag learned while working for the Banner, the Métis history is not acknowledged, because, like old Jules Tonnerre, they "back then had fought on the wrong side" (p. 161). As in Lavallée's novel, the prejudicial slant and pretence of both Canadian mythology and history is exposed.

George Woodcock writes that Laurence's success in illustrating the problem of oppression lies in her use of characterization. Of Pique, he writes that she

> becomes the image and the concrete fact of [Jules and Morag's] relationship, which in its turn is an image of reconciliation.
>
> ... (Laurence) never loses sight of her characters as human beings; she is always observing them from within, in their own rights, for their own sakes, ... And this is why she sees the problems of a people like the Métis ... in terms of human relationships, of the erosion of prejudice through experience and understanding and ultimately empathy.[16]

In The Diviners, Margaret Laurence creates characters, who, by interacting with each other, portray the full impact of intolerance. But they learn to live within certain parameters while maintaining a mode of expression, signing or writing, which keeps their integrity intact.

Moreover, Laurence sketches both sides of the issue. Through the character of Brooke, she portrays a racist who, as an oppressor, is also a victim of imperialism. Brooke embodies the pompous arrogance and rigidity of the British colonizer. But Laurence does not berate him; rather, she shows him in a sympathetic light. His sexual conduct is explained in relation to a childhood experience. When his father finds the nurse fondling him, Brooke is beaten, and made to sit outside strapped to a trunk, wearing a sign declaring, 'I Am Bad'(p. 217). The father accuses the child, the victim in the scenario, of being responsible for the act. The doctrine of making the victim responsible for his plight is self-perpetuating. Furthermore, the physical and verbal abuse at the hands of an authoritarian father and the cruelties inflicted in a British boarding school, even though socially acceptable, are psychologically damaging. And Brooke in turn is cruel towards his wife. In the article, "A Sense of Grievance: Attitudes Toward Men in Contemporary Fiction," Lydia Burton and David Morley describe the oppressive marriage and Brooke's behaviour,

> who throughout nine years of marriage treated [his wife] like a child - a possession to be protected and enjoyed. . . . He persuades her not to continue at university; applies the usual double standards regarding fidelity; constantly puts off her wish to have a child; and finally, and fatally, he does not recognize the importance of Morag's writing to her.[17]

Brooke embodies all the traits of a patriarch; he is domineering, insensitive, arrogant and his selfish individualism will not accommodate a child in his marriage. He denies his wife the freedom he allows for himself and this double-standard is reminiscent of the Canadian volunteer in The Temptations of Big Bear who is also a firm believer in European supremacy.

In her essay, 'Ivory Tower or Grassroots?: The Novelist as Socio-Political Being', Laurence states that she considers writers to be serious if their works reflect the times. She writes that she does

> not have a great deal of affinity with the ivory tower writer whose work bears no reflection of the concerns of everyday life. In fact, I don't believe the ivory tower breed has ever been all that numerous. Writers of serious fiction are almost always, in some way or other, consciously or unconsciously, expressing their own times. ...
>
> For me, fiction is primarily a matter of portraying individual characters as faithfully as I am able to do. These characters, however, do not live in a vacuum. They live in specific places, and any writing about them must of necessity include social commentary.[18]

Laurence places her characters in very realistic and volatile environments and she does not refrain from discussing unmentionable social issues. Not only are they not avoided, but it appears that they are purposely mentioned since all of her characters experience various forms of social injustice. They are all maligned by prejudices and these familiar events are presented in a very direct manner. Laurence further states that

> The growth of some of the themes in my writing - those themes which in the broadest sense I may define as political - took place in my mind in an intertwined and simultaneous way. My sense of social awareness, my feelings of anti-imperialism, anti-colonialism, anti-authoritarianism, had begun, probably, in embryo form in my own childhood; ... The quest for physical and spiritual freedom, the quest for relationships of equality and communication - these themes run through my fiction and are connected with the theme of survival, not mere physical survival, but a survival of the spirit, with human dignity and the ability to give and receive love. ('Ivory Tower', p. 258)

Most characters do not attain these levels of spiritual and physical freedom; they remain isolated. Only Pique has any hope of healthy survival by living within an agrarian community.

Jacques Tonnerre manages to avoid all the perils which the Métis experience in the white world. He is successful because his survival is dependent on his return to the past; he lives at the home of his ancestors on Galloping Mountain. Also, Jacques differs from his siblings because he has a unique kind of power. His strength lies in the confidence that he has in his people and in their way of life. He does not attempt to become assimilated; he withdraws from the world as dictated by white European ideology in order to live according to Métis beliefs, within a community of his people. Pique describes her uncle Jacques as

> some guy. He doesn't come on strong - I don't mean that, not at all. It's just that he's sure of what he's doing, and nobody is going to put him down, if he can help it. He and Mary - that's his wife - they've got four of their own kids, as well as others. ... Jacques goes to Winnipeg sometimes, for Métis meetings and that. He usually comes back with some kid or other, kids whose parents have died or vanished. You know. They've had pretty rough lives, so some of them aren't that easy to get on with. (pp. 438-9)

Jacques' self-confidence and his strength appeal to Pique who then follows in her uncle's footsteps. She tells Morag that she wants to live at Galloping Mountain because she needs Jacques, his wife and the children. They live with their dignity intact as an extended family. Clara Thomas, in her essay, 'Women Writers and the New Land', writes that

> In The Diviners there is a new, young breed of agrarian ... who are determined to make their living from the land. ... At last, Pique is going back to her father's people at Galloping Mountain, whose lives combine an agrarian ideal with social reform, for they make their farm a home for the children and a dynamic centre of hope for the entire Tonnerre connection.[19]

Pique chooses to live with the remaining Tonnerres on the land of their ancestors in order to survive. The Métis struggle to adapt to an urban environment is disastrous in Laurence's novel. In order to have a viable future, Pique has to return to her past heritage.

But this is not the past of British colonialization. Rather, what Laurence is suggesting is a return to a communal life style where the individual is not subjected to rigid patriarchal rules. Nor is there any suggestion of a matriarchal rule. Margaret Fulton, in an article entitled, "Out of Our Past: A New Future," describes that

> Pique's willingness to trek West again to pioneer a new life-style is reminiscent of the kind of dream held by that older generation of women writers and by men like Philip Grove who once believed that the Canadian West was a place where a person could begin anew. Their dreams were doomed to disillusionment because of the dominant attitudes of the male patriarch. Pique goes West as a single woman. She is not going like Abe Spalding to establish a dynasty or to oppose her strength against nature. Pique seeks to share, to love, to harmonize with other humans in their natural habitat. She has no dreams of exploiting nature for profit. She only wants to live, to need and be needed.[20]

Pique needs to return to the Métis past where people live within an extended family. Perhaps the most striking difference between this community and the one of Manawaka are the children which Jacques brings back from his trips to Winnipeg. These orphaned, abandoned and unwanted children are readily accepted in the Métis community. Also, Pique's attitude differs from the settlers like Catherine Parr Trail who is described as a heroine with remarkable qualities who renamed all the wild flowers. Fulton describes this community as one which is not, "governed by some 'power structure' but by rules of deep mutual respect, the keystone of which is equality" (p. 101), or as Pique says, "[a]ll I can do is contribute my share, if I can" (p. 440). A return to the traditional values of the land will allow Pique to live her life as a whole person. She will no longer be an 'unmentionable'.

The quest for identity in both novels concludes with a return to the past, both psychologically and physically. Lavallée and Laurence seem to be advocating a form of apartheid or segregation but, unlike the one imposed by the Canadian government in the form of reservations, this system is self-induced. The Métis people cannot survive within the white community and they are not held accountable in the novels. It is the basic fabric of Canadian history and society woven with a silent form of racial prejudice which resists unravelling that is at fault. Through the interweaving of myth and history, a past emerges for these marginalized people who have been overlooked or misrepresented in conventional and traditional history.

NOTES

1. David Hughes and Evelyn Kallen, The Anatomy of Racism: Canadian Dimensions (Montreal: Harvest House Ltd., 1974), p. 76. All further references to this work appear in the text.

2. Terry Goldie, Fear and Temptation in the Image of the Indigene in Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand Literatures (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), p. 69. Goldie quotes Duke Redbird writing in We are Métis (1980), that within the Canadian context, "the Métis were being identified as a group as early as 1670."

3. Ronald Lavallée, Tchipayuk ou le Chemin du Loup (Paris: Albin Michel, 1987), p. 9. All further references to this work appear in the text.

4. Jean Morisset, "La Conquête du Nord-Ouest, 1885-1985: or The Imperial Quest of British North America," As Long as the Sun Shines and the Water Flows: A Reader in Canadian Native Studies, eds. Ian A.I. Getty and Antoine S. Lussier, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983), p. 285.

5. Ashis Nandy, The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. x.

6. Guy Ferland, "Les débuts parisiens d'un jeune Manitobain," Le Devoir (vol. 78, no.269, le 21 novembre, 1987), pp. D-1, D-12.

7. Margaret Laurence, The Diviners (Toronto: Bantam Books 1975), p. 145. All further references to this work appear in the text.

8. Albert Memmi, Portrait du Colonisé (Montréal: l'étincelle, 1972), p. 116.

9. Leslie Monkman, A Native Heritage: Images of the Indian in English-Canadian Literature (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), p. 62.

10. Terrence Craig, Racial Attitudes in English-Canadian Fiction 1905-1980 (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1987), p. 117.

11. George Woodcock, "The Human Elements: Margaret Laurence's Fiction," The Human Elements: Critical Essays, ed. David Helwig (Canada: Oberon Press, 1978), p. 160.

12. Susan Sontag, Illness as Metaphor (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1978), p. 72. All further references to this work appear in the text.

13. Marcienne Rocard, "The Dispossession Theme in Margaret Laurence's The Diviners," World Literature Written in English, 21.1 (Spring 1982), p. 111.

14. Pamela McCallum, "Communication and History: Themes in Innis and Laurence," Studies in Canadian Literature 3.2, 1978. p. 13.

15. Marsha Stanfield Bordner, "The Woman as Artist in the Twentieth- Century Novel," Diss. (Ohio State University, 1979), p. 153.

16. George Woodcock, Northern Spring (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1987), pp. 108-9. All further references to this work appear in the text.

17. Lydia Burton and David Morley, "A Sense of Grievance: Attitudes toward Men in Contemporary Fiction," Canadian Forum LV.654 (September 1975), p. 59.

18. Margaret Laurence "Ivory Tower or Grassroots?: The Novelist as Socio-Political Being," Canadian Novelists and the Novel, eds. Douglas Daymond and Leslie Monkman (Ottawa: Borealis Press, 1981), p. 251. All further references to this work appear in the text.

19. Clara Thomas, "Women Writers and the New Land" in The New Land: Studies in a Literary Theme, eds. Richard Chadbourne and Hallvard Dahlie (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1978), p. 48.

20. E. Margaret Fulton, "Out of Our Past: A New Future," Laurentian University Review IX.1, (November 1976), p. 101. All further references to this work appear in the text.

CHAPTER THREE

PATRIARCHAL TYRANNY

The Oxford Concise Dictionary defines tyranny as "despotic or cruel exercise of power" and this is exactly the type of control administered by the character of Noah in Timothy Findley's Not Wanted on the Voyage. The novel can be interpreted as an articulation of oppression within a Canadian context because some comments found at the beginning of the work specify elements of imperial domination. For example, on the first page the narrator writes that the band played Rule Britannia! This is part of a mock description of the departure of the ark, but the implications are obvious.

Findley undertakes the challenge of rewriting a part of history. The first sentence states that, "[e]veryone knows it wasn't like that"[21] and the rest of the novel purposefullydispels the legends and myths about the story of the flood. The narrator concludes the introduction by correcting the naming of the event: "Well. It wasn't an excursion. It was the end of the world" (p. 3). The apocalyptic myth is retold in all of its horror and subjective experiences are central to this new story.

The primary tyrant in this work is Noah. He is a subordinate of Yaweh, who as Supreme Being institutes the laws and rules which Noah is responsible for enforcing. The relationship between the two is typical of a hierarchy, that is, the underling is terrified of his master who threatens punishment if he is not obeyed. Moreover, Noah imposes his fear on everyone around him. His tyrannical behaviour escalates after Yaweh's visit and Noah is portrayed as a man who is unable to control his emotions. Yet at the same time, he is described as the embodiment of the rational and the scientific.

Noah's relationship with everything around him is one of manipulation and exploitation and he uses nature as his private laboratory. The similarities between Noah and his God can be found in the book of Genesis which states that Adam was created in the image of God. James Harrison writes that Noah

> ... slavishly obeys (and where necessary supplements or invents) his creator's least tyrannical edict. An alchemist and a magician, Noah's relationship to nature is essentially manipulative and exploitive. Even such "scientific" experiments as he conducts ... are manipulative - an assertion more of his mastery over than his curiosity about nature. So, naturally enough, he views Yaweh's attitude to his creation as similarly a matter of manipulating through miracles and constantly demanding a dividend of grateful and gratifying adoration.[22]

If Noah is made in the image of God, and Yaweh's vengeance is directed against everything living on the planet, then it follows that Noah will respond in kind.

Yaweh is presented as the vengeful and malevolent God of the Old Testament. When he first appears in the novel, he is having a breakdown while surrounded by a retinue of warrior angels, including his son Michael Archangelis who is described in heroic terms. Women are noticeably absent and Yaweh's cat, Abraham, fears him. Yaweh is describing how people are corrupt when the narrator observes that

> Yaweh's passions were apparently so violent beneath the seeming calm of his robes that Abraham was driven from his place in Yaweh's lap and all at once the silver cat jumped down and lay upon the floor, his tail twitching in agitation, while his eye roamed the Pavilion, looking for ah exit. (p. 89)

This seething and decrepit misanthropist wants to punish mankind for its sins of pride, disrespect, and disregard of his authority. But his anger and hatred arise from his own wounded pride and, when he projects his feelings on others, he resolves to kill all of them. Moreover he is not content to destroy only the culprits, that is, the non-conformists and the rebels, but the entire surface of the planet is to be submerged by his wrath. Like Noah, he is incapable of controlling his emotions. This interpretation of the apocalypse commanded by a God who has created man in his image is very plausible. Yaweh is a patriarch, who, in an hysterical fit of anger, indiscriminately destroys all.

The title of the patriarch on earth is Doctor and he is portrayed as a wife-beater (p. 129) who calls his wife a "cretin" (p. 67); there are numerous incidents depicting both physical and psychological abuse. Noah only tolerates her because it is part of Yaweh's plan. Without her, the ark will not leave and he will die. He is described as

> frantic. Not, it must be admitted, because he feared for the loss of someone he loved - but because he feared for the loss of someone he needed. Without Mrs Noyes, the ark could not depart, and its voyage would be doomed. This was Yaweh's Edict: "you and your sons and your wife and the wives of your sons..." These eight - or none would be saved. (pp. 130-1)

The relationship between Noah and his wife is of the same quality as all of his relationships. They are not based on love, but on need, and he manipulates and exploits both people and animals in order to fulfil his needs. Human beings and nature are both treated in the same manner; he is abusive and irreverent towards everyone and everything.

Furthermore, by murdering the Unicorn, Noah attempts to destroy the imagination, which is presented as an important aspect of the human mind. This creature is frail, harmless, and delightful and its murder is another example of the senseless brutality prevalent in the novel. The narrator remarks that

> The Unicorn was truly dead. He had lived and died and lived again. And died. And as Lucy would say he would spend eternity living and dying. Just as people either did or didn't - could or couldn't - would or wouldn't return to the memory of the moment when the Unicorn was flesh and blood and lived in the wood at the bottom of Noah's Hill. (p. 281)

Memory can revive the Unicorn but people are now responsible for his life and the manner in which he is revived in myth.

But if memory cannot be awakened, then history will not be rewritten and the past will be lost. The Unicorn is described as someone who is "endlessly afraid" (p. 55) and as a figure of legends, he acquires immortality. Also, the Faeries die of hunger in the woods. All of these creatures who are not part of the rational order will always be rejected. Lucy states that "they will go on throwing all the apes and the demons and all the Unicorns overboard for as long as this voyage lasts..." (p. 349). And she fears that it might last forever, the voyage and the destruction of everything that the imagination can create.

The entire novel is structured around the concept of oppression. Even the title, Not Wanted on the Voyage, refers to rejection and segregation. In this highly civilized world, anyone who is different from the acceptable majority is destroyed. For example, after Mrs Noyes gave birth to a mentally handicapped male child, she committed infanticide. This type of behaviour is socially acceptable and the parent does not have any alternative because

> Sometimes, if you did not kill it yourself, other people came and killed it for you. This was the rule - though not the law. The law said nothing about such matters - perhaps because the law assumed that anyone civilized knew the rules. (p. 149)

Mentally handicapped children like Lotte are labelled forbidden and they are unwelcomed. Yet it is Lotte who can understand and see the Faeries. Like the Unicorn, she represents the world of the imagination as well as manifesting the link between animals and human beings. As Mrs Noyes grieves for her child named Adam, Doctor Noyes attempts to forget the whole incident.

Moreover, when Hannah gives birth to a deformed child, the narrator notes that, "Noah was determined, of course, that the child's deformity was her responsibility alone" (p. 341). This ape-child is his child, conceived in an incestuous relationship and its rejection points to Noah's dislike of the animal world. He refuses to admit that there is a link between the two worlds. Also, like Yaweh, he does not accept responsibility for his actions; rather, he accuses the most easily accessible person and punishes them. Tyrannical behaviour stems from not taking responsibility for one's actions and a deluded sense of self-importance, as the narrator notices that

> Here, Noah took that always wild and unpredictable turn that was meant to save him from any kind of blame: that turning which even convinced himself that he was blameless and - more than blameless - that he and he alone was saving the entire situation by salvaging everyone and everything from certain ruin: that wrenching that began with his arm extended and his finger reaching out through the air to find the true and absolute culprit: the inevitable cause of all that was threatening, all that was dangerous; all that was foolish; all that was madness. That finger of reason that always found someone else - and most usually, his wife. (p. 265)

These thoughts occur after he rapes Emma and mutilates the Unicorn. This insightful description of the workings of the patriarchal mind shows how Noah can totally insulate himself against everything that is occurring around him. He is blameless, now and always, and he needs to find an absolute offender, and the nearest person is Mrs Noyes. The man's behaviour is devoid of emotional maturity and clear rational thought. But what is important to note here is that, as with all examples of male supremacists in fiction, it is the victim who is blamed for being a victim and the patriarch conceals himself in clouds of self-deception.

In Not Wanted on the Voyage, Timothy Findley presents one of the few clear and concise portrayals of the oppressor in Canadian literature. What is distinctive in this case is the historic scope which specifies the origins of this type of behaviour when the narrator describes that

> During Noah's darkest days aboard the ark he thought much and often about his illustrious forebear (Adam). After all - historically, they shared the same responsibilities: the survival of the human race; the subjugation of nature; the establishment of law and order. All to say nothing of the warring in their own families. (p. 238)

Basically, these patriarchal duties and dilemmas are to be found throughout the Old Testament. What is disturbing in this passage is that Noah sees the reiterated pattern of failure, but he does not stop to query why all these attempts to master the world have failed. Instead, he decides that this time he will succeed, at any cost, thinking that

> All he need do was maintain his power amongst the others.
>
> This time, success. This time, mastery by whatever means. This time, the will of God would triumph, no matter what the cost. (p. 239)

This uncaring man will knowingly destroy anything in order to succeed in his latest endeavour. He is unable to analyze the situation intelligently because his emotions blind him to any form of reasoning or judgment. This type of behaviour is not unusual in the history of mankind, and the motto, success at any cost, is still viable today.

Furthermore, Noah is also depicted as an individual who experiences a great deal of pain in the form of self-pity because he thinks that life has failed him. In a depressive state, he wonders,

> Why did the children of the mighty always turn out so badly? There was not a son in his possession he could love. ... And there was worse: the one dread thought that Noah could not prevent whenever he came to Japeth in his mind: you cannot be an ape and be of God! And he is mine. ... (p. 239)

Noah is disappointed with his life because his family is not what he expected them to be. As a father, he does not accept and love his children for the people that they are; rather, he hates them because they are not who he wants them to be. These people are in his 'possession', therefore they have to live according to his laws. But what annoys him the most is the fact that they are a reflection of who he is, that is, ungod-like and human.

By assigning different roles to each character, Findley is able to depict numerous responses to the state of oppression. Hannah's way of dealing with her environment contrasts with that of the other female characters, but this is not achieved without torment. Pregnant with her father-in-law's child, and living isolated from the other women on the ark, she thinks that

> She desperately needed - and wanted - someone to talk to, especially a woman; but she could not bring herself to do it. All her pride was shuttered in her silence: all her ambition was locked in the choice she had made to sit on the right hand of power. Of all the people on the ark -aside, perhaps, from Doctor Noyes himself - Hannah was the only passenger who had thought about survival clinically: who had reasoned through the whole long process of staying alive at any cost: whose perseverance was calculated from moment to moment. (p. 267)

As in The Temptations of Big Bear (p. 125), it is dangerous to think like the oppressor because the person begins to act like him. Her decision to live with the power figures places her in a state of loneliness, isolation, and a moment to moment struggle for survival. She has become the servant of the men on the upper deck even though this is not what she wants to do. Being a woman, she is not allowed the same privileges as the men and Hannah is described as

> shaking with contained anger. ... When the urge was on him, she took down the old man's dictation and patiently read it back to him. Never arguing -never saying "this is right" and "this is wrong" or "I agree with this" and "disagree with that." Nothing. Never a word. But she was full of words. Sentences and paragraphs. Whispers and shouts. Hundreds of them. Thousands. But she was a woman and she could not speak. Aloud. But only think in silence and go mad. (p. 243)

As in all cases of tyranny, the oppressed are silenced and their words, like their minds, are deemed worthless. In this slavish role, Hannah has lost all dignity and integrity. Even before the flood, she lived with "her mind on any other world but this" (p. 14); she is a fragmented character whose mind/body split provides her with the necessary protection against the brutality of daily life.

Apartheid reigns supreme even on the ark; the people are segregated according to hierarchies established by Noah. This separation of the characters into two groups is analyzed by Donald G. Wallace. In the article, "Mankind as Outsider in Timothy Findley's Not Wanted on the Voyage," he notes that the division exists from the beginning of the work; one group is destructive and isolated from nature while the other is nurturing and at peace with the physical world. Wallace writes that

> This old and highly entertaining story is given much greater density and power by details emphasizing the antithetical attitudes towards nature in the conflicting groups. The first pair of antinomies concerns communication with other animals. Noah and his group are never shown speaking to animals, though there is no evidence that they can't. Mrs. Noyes and her party, on the other hand, often are. Below decks in the Ark they have formed one interdependent, supportive, talkative community, though that interdependence includes the needs of meat-eaters. However, when Mrs. Noyes brings her sheep on deck at the end of the voyage and attempts to lead them in a song of rejoicing, they can only baaa. Yaweh's sacrifice -Noah's sacrifice - has irrevocably cut mankind off from the community he was once part of.[23]

The loss of speech of the animals indicates man's self-induced isolation from nature and his rejection of his relation to the animal world. Furthermore, it also represents the silent state of victims of oppression. They are capable of producing sound but the sound no longer has meaning. Like the sounds uttered by the Tonnerres, they are powerless because they remain unheard and indecipherable. But it could also represent a different form of language which cannot be translated. The common language they once shared is gone and now their speech is foreign to man. Moreover, the sense of community is destroyed and this is found with all oppressed groups who are separated from their heritage, either geographically, culturally or linguistically.

The character of Ham is atypical because he is the only man living on the lower deck. Since he loves animals and he is a kind and nurturing man, he is not worthy of any position of significance on the upper deck. Ham appreciates nature and he observes and records what he sees. Unlike his father, he does not engage in harmful experiments, nor does he alter what he notices because he does not seek to master nature. He is simply innocently curious. His mother thinks of him as

> The intense, sweet boy whose love of science had led him into every pit and to the top of every tree - whose star-gazing had trapped him, even in the depths of winter, with his notebooks high in the cedar grove and whose love of animals had caused him to mutilate himself ... (pp. 72-3)

He even hides Mottyl's kittens from his father. Ham is the antithetical to the other male figures and he falls in love with Lucy playing Adam to her Eve in a skit performed for Yaweh. This is a complete inversion of roles for the performers, since Ham is not like Adam who was created in

God's image. And Lucy, or Lucifer, the son of Yaweh and brother to Michael, is an ally of oppressed creatures. This complex figure further subverts the concepts of good and evil. The narrator explains that

> That was why Lucy had joined the human race. Survival. In order to survive the holocaust in heaven. In order to prevent the holocaust on earth. (p. 110)

The devil is an androgynous figure who escaped the wrath of Yaweh, and now wants to save the human race. This rebellious figure leaves heaven which is described as a holocaust and becomes a prophet for the people on the ark. It would be interesting to know how hell is described in this world; perhaps it is symbolized by the ark which becomes the earth. After her final transformation, Lucy is described as:

> The face - this time - was neither round not angular, but wide and flat, with extraordinary eyes of an almost golden colour: animal eyes, fierce and tender. The eyes of a prophet whose words, like an animal's warning cries, would be ignored. (p. 344)

This pessimistic vision of the unacknowledged prophet who is linked to the animal world through her eyes and webbed hands accentuates the fatalistic ending of the book. Man refuses to respect and to accept his relationship with animals and, as a consequence, a vision of a better world becomes absurd; like all the cries of the oppressed, they go unheard.

Man's relationship with nature is discussed several times in the novel. Both Yaweh and Noah rule over nature; George Woodcock writes that

> The law of Yaweh establishes the rule of man over the realm of nature, and to Noah it is given, as it is given to Adam, to wield that rule. The result is a record of cruelties and sacrificial slaughters ...[24]

What the flood represents then is a war between man and the physical world, as well as the world of the imagination. Entire species are cremated or drowned and one of the most striking examples of senseless cruelty occurs when the whales attempt to board the ark. The slaughter of these animals, like the slaughter of the seals in Riverrun, is justified by the patriarch. According to Noah, the Pirates from hell are attempting to appropriate the ark. Therefore, they are to be exterminated. But through Mrs Noyes' eyes, this scene is horrific:

> The ark - becalmed and heaving beneath the fog - was surrounded on all sides by hundreds of playful and frolicking creatures - leaping out of the water, waving their flippers at the ark and its occupants and calling out; "hallo! Hallo!" before they fell back beneath the surface.
>
> ...
>
> A great, grey pearly shape - all gleaming and straining against the air - leapt up before Mrs Noyes - and fell at her feet.
>
> Rolling on its back like a cat at play, it raised its head and looked at her with eyes she would never forget.
>
> The whole visage was a message of joy and greeting.
>
> But in that moment of recognition, as Mrs Noyes and the creature looked at one another and smiled - Japeth's sword descended - swiftly and fatally. (pp. 235-7)

Noah, infringing on the whales' territory, misinterprets their actions. Staying in character, he blames them for encroaching on his territory, that is, the ark. Mrs Noyes understands what is happening because she can decipher the language of the whales and the entire scene is symbolic of all the acts of brutality occurring in the novel. The two sides do not understand each other even when the animals have the power of speech.

The flood also represents a new beginning even though there is little hope that it will lead to a better life for the inhabitants. Noah has founded a hierarchal ark meaning that the bad habits of the old world are being transported to the new land. This system of apartheid proclaims that the people on the lower deck are responsible for caring and feeding the animals while the ruler and his followers live more comfortably on the upper deck. A change in attitude has not occurred - the only change is one of locale. The elitist world based on a rigid and exclusive monotheism thrives and the effects are self-perpetuating. The ark contains the old world drowned which will become the new world. Like the Europeans who populated the Americas, the narrow rationalism, dogmatic religions and adamant intolerance will be carried to the new world and will violate it. Geographical relocation does not alter patriarchal attitudes.

The reactions of the oppressed in Not Wanted on the Voyage are similar to those found in other works. Mrs. Noyes drinks gin to forget that she is married to Noah; Lazarus in The Diviners drinks to numb his emotions. Mottyl, being blind, is always in the dark but she sees more than the other characters. With her variegated colouring and irregular arrangement of spots, she represents a more natural and integrated being. But these traits are not valued in Noah's world. While walking in the garden, she is horrified by the stench of burning bodies:

> Mottyl very rarely cried aloud. She had always been a stoic cat and mostly, when afraid, was silent - and when in pain, she went into hiding. But here, in the yard, with her nostrils overwhelmed by the violent stink of smouldering fur and the sound of burning innards singing in her ears and the oozing paste of marrow pulling at her paws and the terror of the smoke and the fear of the fire she could not quite see; she was overcome and she stood - immobilized - and threw back her head and wailed.
>
> No one heard her. (p. 132)

This scene resembles the burning Tonnerre shack in The Diviners, where Piquette and her children die and Morag notices the smell of burning meat. Fear is expressed in silence, pain is voiced in seclusion but excruciating anguish is articulated as an unheard wail. Fire is a tool of sacrifice and the cremation of innocent beings by Noah whom she calls the "creator of her blindness and the killer of her children" (p. 132) is reminiscent of Nazi extermination techniques. These lives are engulfed in pain which is slightly alleviated with drink or cries of anguish.

In this world the young are not sacred and Mottyl knows that she cannot protect her offspring from the tyrant. Newborns are killed in ritual sacrifices, in scientific experiments and when they have mental or physical anomalies.

And Mottyl, in total despair, thinks that her only power lies in controlling her reproductive organs. She thinks that

> There was nothing she could do to stop him. She had bitten him and scratched him and bloodied him in every way a cat could find, but in the end he always won the day, no matter where she hid her nest or what her defenses were. She did, of course, have one way to stop him. She could give up having kittens - if she only knew how. (p. 19)

By no longer having kittens, Mottyl's pain would cease. She knows she has no power over Noah; he will continue killing her offspring as soon as they are born. Therefore, her only alternative is to stop bearing kittens altogether. The implications of such an action when applied to humans are appalling and this might account in part for Emma's behaviour. In this world, feminine power lies in the reproductive organs and the females can alter their destiny by not reproducing and thereby eliminating the grieving for murdered offspring, whether they be kittens or children. But it will also result in the end of the race or species.

Mrs Noyes' perception of civilization is rather unique because she sees it as an ordeal. This tedious and hypocritical performance of empty rituals aggravates her. But she walks in the woods and

> when she felt that civilization was falling away from her shoulders, ... she was gratified. What a burden it had been! "You bet it was!" (She spoke aloud to the birds). Carrying all that behaviour - all those strictures: "sir" and "madam" - bowing and scraping and kissing hands - falling down and rising up on cue. Using knives and spoons and plates in the proper order - putting up one's hair and wearing caps and scarves and veils to cover this and that and the other so the gentlemen wouldn't be

> corrupted - and having it all torn away whenever your husband felt like taking his pleasure. The oppression of time - the daily ritual of violence - all that prayer and blood and wine - and the dreariness of protocol: having to ask permission to speak and touch and move. And the lies ... and the empty smiles ... and the hidden jars of gin.... (p. 146)

Civilization itself is described as oppressive because it is merely organized hypocrisy, and both marriage and religion are forms of brutal and merciless imprisonment. The role of women is very well defined in this cultivated world: they have to cover themselves properly in order to keep the males honest, and yet allow them their pleasures whenever it pleases them. The burden of male sexuality is placed on the woman; she is responsible for his longings as well as his actions. In Mrs Noyes description, the word 'civilization' has many synonyms - oppression, domination, brutality, violence, injustice, condemnation, deceit, hypocrisy, sexual assault, verbal abuse, slavery, etc. In the patriarchal discourse, this word is associated with order, science, experiments, intellect, breeding, ritual and tradition, culture and religion, and all things positive. In this instance, it is language as perceived and used by the marginalized group which is being emphasized. The most noticeable difference is that the valorization of the word is diametrically changed in each case.

All of these authors, that is, Such, Wiebe, Kapesh, Lavallée, Laurence and Findley, are rewriting history and this tendency is now frequently found in countries which have been exploited and abused by European imperialism. In an article entitled, "Post-Colonialism, Post-Modernism and the Rehabilitation of Post-Colonial History," Helen Tiffin describes this phenomenon as an attempt to define one's own history, not in terms of the conquering ideology, but in relation to the native soil. The term, post-colonial, is defined as the

> writing and reading practices grounded in some form of colonial experience occurring outside Europe but as a consequence of European expansion into and exploitation of "the other" worlds.[25]

This includes Canadian literatures where authors are challenging the political and cultural authority of Europe. And Tiffin refers to Findley's novel as a post-colonial work which attempts to break away from European constructs when she states that

> The writer adopts the positions of those already written out of, or marginalised by, the western record of historical materialism - oppressed or annihilated peoples, women and animals - all those who, in Timothy Findley's phrase, were "not wanted on the voyage". It is not surprising to find, then, that escaping the constraints of written records is frequently thematised in such works, as well as escaping the conceptual constraints of imperial cultures whose programmes of conquest and annihilation and suppression are enshrined in language. (p. 176)

The first sentence of Findley's novel declares that a story was inaccurate and the narrator begins a correct retelling of the events. The short section on the flood found in Genesis is extended into a lengthy novel. The two principal focalisers are Mrs Noyes and Mottyl, an elderly woman and a cat, both members of groups that are marginalized. The point of view is unusual; for example, Mottyl describes Her Creator, Yaweh, as "a walking sack of bones and hair" (p. 66) which differs greatly from Noah's reverence for Him. This shift in perspective reduces the authoritative function of the patriarch.

One striking example of the enshrinement of the suppression in the language of the oppressor in Canada is the term Indian, a misnomer concocted by Europeans. Labelling Natives as red skins is erroneous, as explained in the preface of Riverrun. An appropriate name for the indigenous people of Canada does not exist; the words Native, Amerindian, Indigens are all inaccurate because they were created by the oppressor. One of the definitions for 'native' in the Oxford Dictionary is a "member of non-European or less civilized indigenous people." The negative implications are self-evident. The term aboriginal is a political designation and it means, "indigenous, existing in a land at the dawn of history, or before the arrival of the colonists;..." In the province of Quebec, the word 'autochthon' is commonly used and it is defined as "original or earliest known inhabitants." This is still a designation by and in relation to the oppressor but it seems to be less condescending. The official languages of Canada do not have an accurate and respectful name for its most ancient people.

This recent post-colonial approach to writing and interpreting works of 'marginal' literatures creates a promising climate according to Tiffin, and she concludes her argument by stating that

> For post-colonial writers the current textual and theoretical revolution does not represent a "crisis of authority", but enables creativity and restitution. By refusing, realigning, deconstructing the "master narrative" of western history, by interrogating its tropes as well as its contents, post-colonial writers have been and are recapturing notions of self from "other" and investigating that destructive binarism itself. It is also important to refuse contemporary critical enclosure by the neo-hegemonic thrusts of post-modernism and post-structuralism whose very nomenclatures, capturing world space for the accidentals of European cultural time, invoke a neo-universalism from which all post-colonial literatures have been deliberately detaching themselves. (p. 179)

The concept of universality accentuates similarities and discounts differences. By recounting and retelling the particular as opposed to the universal, the author captures the marginal experience, that is, the lives of the groups or individuals who have been labelled 'unwanted' according to the ideals of European supremacy. This process of marginalization is a response to a binary and reductionist approach to life where everything is either good or bad. It never is, just for the sake of being; that is, nothing is accepted without being judged and evaluated as positive or negative. This judgmental, competitive and aggressive approach is practised by patriarchs such as Noah.

All of these novels describe the lives of individuals who have been unwillingly situated as outsiders in a patriarchal society characterized by intolerance and ignorance. Yet these people are portrayed as being more humane and somehow more human than members of the group in power who are proud of creating civilization and of their glorious history which began in antiquity. Like the beings trapped on the lower decks of the ark, marginalized people share common characteristics. Mrs Noyes reflects that

> We are truly captives here, ...; every one of us - and yet they call this: being saved.
>
> Maybe that was what she had meant by safety and sadness: that she and all these creatures with her shared their captivity in a way they could never have shared the wood. That when you are caught together in the same trap, you share the same fear of darkness and of walls and you also have the same enemy. You fear the same jailer. You share the same dream of freedom - waiting, all together, for the same door to open. You also learn to survive together in ways the uncaged would never think of. Could she ever have imagined, for instance, that - being in the wood and hearing a bear in pain - she would walk amongst other bears to comfort it? Yet, on the ark, she not only walked amongst bears - she sat amongst them and was unafraid. Just as the Unicorn was unafraid of her. And that, too, had once been impossible to imagine. Yet here they were. Together. Safe with one another - but...
>
> What is this cruelty, then, she wondered; that battens those doors up there and locks us in, as if we were dragons - and fearsome?
>
> The thought of Noah's rages and of Japeth armed gave her the answer.
>
> Cruelty was fear in disguise and nothing more. And hadn't one of Japeth's holy strangers said that fear itself was nothing more than a failure of the imagination?
>
> That was why Mrs Noyes had been afraid of bears.
>
> She had not been able to imagine consoling them. (pp. 251-2)

A community is built from a lack of freedom and choice. Oppression derives from a lack of imagination, from the fear of the unknown and from an absence of love, compassion and empathy for other beings. A system of apartheid provides safety and diminishes the loneliness of the people who are subjugated by patriarchal laws.

The theme of the imagination is present throughout the work. Early in the novel, Mrs Noyes describes imagination as a curse. Her husband is preparing a sacrificial animal and the narrator states that

> She closed her eyes and covered her ears - but it did no good. Anything she might have avoided hearing or seeing, she could hear and see in her mind. And what was the difference? Imagination was a curse and she wished devoutly she had not been "blessed" with it. Blessed. Who did the blessing, she wondered. (p. 20)

Under these circumstances, Mrs Noyes wishes to become oblivious to her surroundings yet she is unable to close her mind to the cruelties inflicted on defenceless animals. Unlike Hannah who is more adept at separating herself from the immediate world and escaping to another world, Noah's wife, who does not have a first name, relies on gin to numb her imagination.

In this novel, many of the human characters are presented as malicious creatures while animals are portrayed as being more humane. Killing for sacrifices, rituals, experimentation or out of fear, and massive destruction are human traits which do not have a counterpart in the animal world. The playful whales, Mottyl, and the entire cast in the forest present perspectives from nature. This is a structured world where the individual is responsible for himself but he does receive help from his allies because there is a sense of community. What is unusual here is that it is not idyllic; rather, it is presented realistically, with all the danger and brutality found in the wilderness. Yet all the animals fear Noah and call him a demon. Mottyl is described as having

> a healthy fear of dragons and of demons. And anything whose scat had the smell of meat or whose voice was either a bark or a yip or whose wingspread cast a shadow larger than her own - all these were enemies. But enemies were a part of nature and a person had to accommodate their existence. Going into the wood, for instance, a person's wariness doubled automatically - just as it did in an open field or walking into a room where Doctor Noyes was in residence. In the latter case - as with dragons and demons - it would be fair to say that wariness tripled. (pp. 43-4)

Man is described as being the most terrifying creature because his cruel and malicious behaviour surpasses that of all others. And the sacrifice, rituals, mass murders, the submersion of all life under water and the imprisonment on the ark allows for the interpretation of the forest as idyllic in comparison to the human world.

NOTES

21. Timothy Findley, Not Wanted on the Voyage (Markham: Penguin Books, 1985), p. 3. All further references to this work appear in the text.

22. James Harrison, Review of Not Wanted on the Voyage, World Literature Written in English, 25.1 (Spring 1985), p.119.

23. Donald G. Wallace, "Mankind as Outsider in Timothy Findley's Not Wanted on the Voyage," Laurentian University Review, XVIII.2 (February 1986), pp. 84-5.

24. George Woodcock, Northern Spring: The Flowering of Canadian Literature (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1987), p. 171.

25. Helen Tiffin, "Post-Colonialism, Post-Modernism and the Rehabilitation of Post-Colonial History," Journal of Commonwealth Literature, XXIII.1 (1988), p. 170. All further references to this work appear in the text.

CONCLUSION

It could be argued that the five novels written by white authors practice unintentional cultural appropriation. Nevertheless, their understanding of the ideology of Natives and Métis corresponds closely with that of Kapesh for whom the Native is not 'other.' For white authors, who of course have not experienced what it means to be Native in Canada, the Native remains 'other', but they describe both the subjective experience and the ideology with characteristics similar to those found in Kapesh's tale. If this argument is valid, then appropriation is probably an unfair comment.

The Native world is characterized by an ideology which reveres the earth while the Europeans are shown as wanting to conquer the land. This sharp contrast present in all the works polarizes the two groups and if taken too far, could actually create another version of a stereotype which would resemble that of the noble savage. But all the authors avoid this trap by presenting the Native characters in a variety of situations interacting with other characters. Their thoughts and actions are not uniformly virtuous, nor are they uniformly despicable.

All six novels provide vivid descriptions of the impact of European colonialism. The atrocities which resulted in the deaths of countless people, psychic numbing, suffering, alcohol abuse, poverty, loss of cultural values, spiritual beliefs, languages and names, are further aggravated by the oppressor's apathy or hatred expressed toward the unwanted. He rejects any responsibility for their plight, and characters like Noah, who refuse to acknowledge the consequences of their actions, blame the victim for his predicament. This is the fundamental aspect of the Canadian past, present and future which is being addressed in these literary works.

History is re-written to include subjective experience, thereby dispelling myths about the past. And when this perspective originates from a member of a marginalized group who is depicted with psychological realism, then what appears to be the cold and detached facts of history become part of the lived experience of political oppression. On a theoretical and academic level, the problem is much more complex. Canadian literatures are labelled as either French or English and they are studied according to the European traditions and standards. This position excludes Native writers and their works. Also, the reductionist approach is inadequate when attempting to describe a holistic ideology. Defining one's national literature from an internal perspective by integrating the past, accepting the ancestry of the land, and challenging the authority of European tradition would create an open and favourable climate where other perspectives could flourish.

What is also manifest in these works is the deficiency of language to represent the Native people without contempt. The European obsession with renaming, and the borrowing of words to pacify the Natives are further examples of how language itself is oppressive. Changes are needed in the language so that marginalized groups can be portrayed without the imposition of oppressive and negative qualifiers. The discourse of colonization, still in effect, is quite destructive because it separates the two groups and keeps the indigenous people in a subordinate position.

The authors of these novels have attempted and succeeded in de-marginalizing the Native who, in past works of literature, where stereotyped in extreme positions such as the primitive beast or the noble savage. Their representation was oppressive in that the authors used the Native as a figure to reflect on white values. In these more contemporary works the Native is allowed the same freedom and range of representation as the white characters. They are no longer reduced to standardized roles.

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